



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

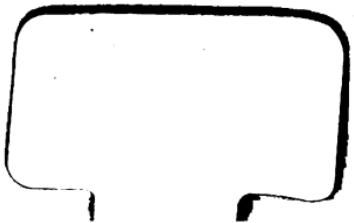
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

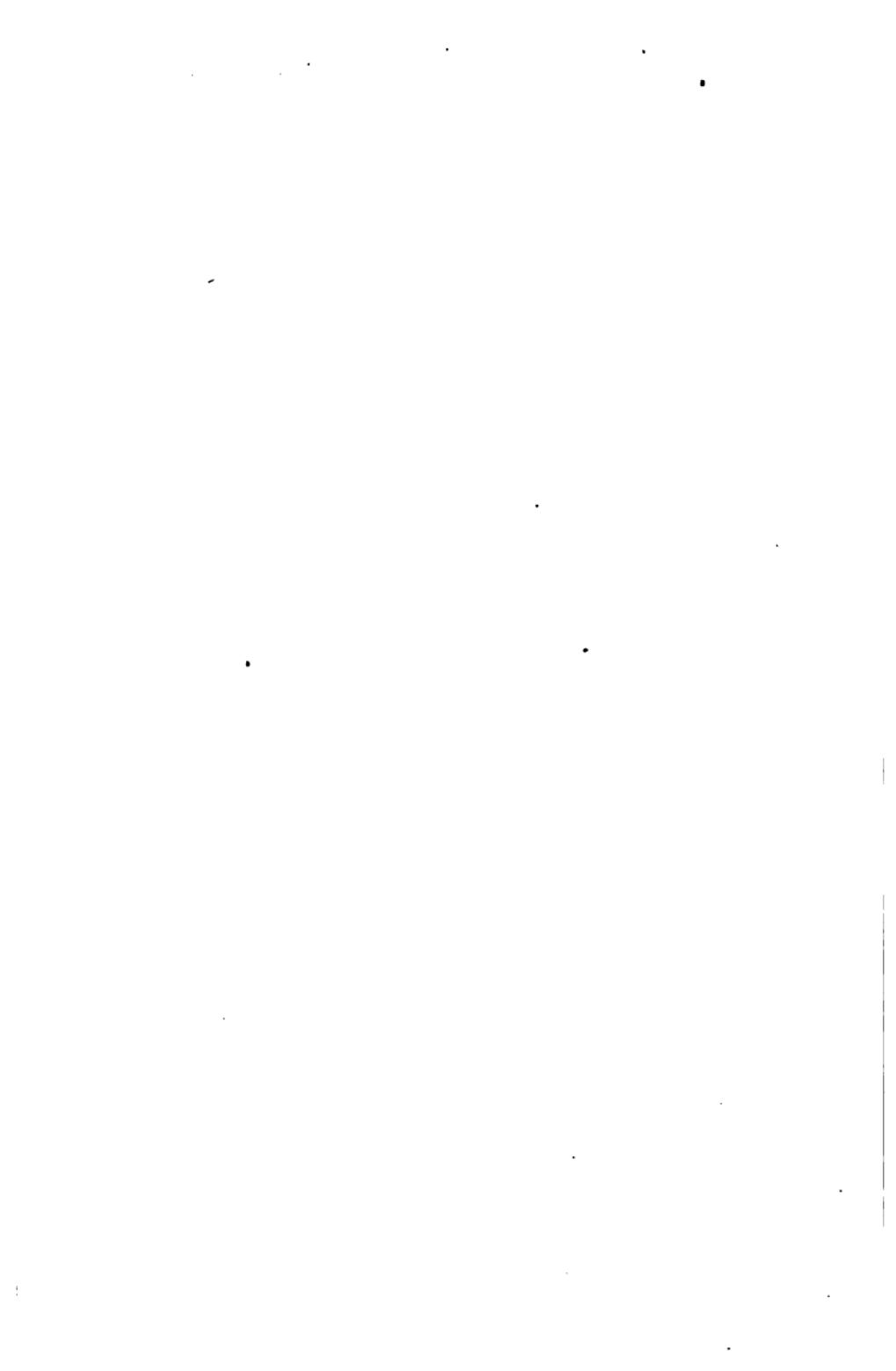
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

GRANDFATHER







GRANDFATHER.



'Oh, what shall I do if I have to go away, and never hear any of your beautiful stories ?

Frontispiece.

GRANDFATHER

BY

E. C. PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF 'THE ORPHANS,' 'BUNCHY,' 'MEYRICK'S
PROMISE,' 'HILDA AND HER DOLL,' ETC.



GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN, & WELSH

SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERY AND HARRIS

WEST CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON

1884

2537. e. 42.



E. P. DUTTON AND CO., NEW YORK.

The Rights of Translation and of Reproduction are Reserved.

TO

SUSANNAH SMITH,

AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FOR MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS,

AND IN REMEMBRANCE OF MUTUAL LOVE

AND GREAT REGARD

FOR OUR DEAR AND MOST VALUED OLD FRIEND,

Alexander Blair, L.L.D.,

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

CONTENTS.

—o—

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE SISTERS,	7
II. 'POOR BAIRNS,'	21
III. 'LITTLE MOTHER,'	35
IV. ELLA'S ADVENTURE,	47
V. A WEARY JOURNEY,	77
VI. FOLLY'S ADVICE,	93
VII. A WAYWARD 'LILY,'	106
VIII. THE SICK CHILD'S DREAM,	117
IX. GRANDFATHER'S STORY,	133
X. SEPARATED,	146
XI. THE LOOKING-GLASS,	164
XII. THE GOLDEN WEDDING,	179
XIII. THE MYSTERY SOLVED,	194
XIV. THE TWO BIRDS,	206
XV. IN GRANDFATHER'S STUDY,	216



GRANDFATHER.

—o—

CHAPTER I.

THE SISTERS.

‘**P**OOR bairns! poor bairns! poor bairns!’ Becky, a servant girl, thus three times repeated these three little words, in a most sorrowful tone of voice, and her face, as she spoke, corresponded with her sad accent, for that too was stamped with melancholy; and no wonder, for a great sorrow had come to her and the family in which she served.

Her mistress, the young ladies’ mother, had died a week ago, and this meant not only the loss of one of the very best of mothers and mistresses, but also the breaking up of a very happy home.

‘Poor bairns! poor bairns! poor bairns!’

Rebecca said a fourth, fifth, and sixth time, as she sat in her comfortable little housekeeper's room washing up the large teapot and a few other things which were her very own.

Ever since Rebecca had been to service she had had but two mistresses, and had lived with the



They were old friends, these two, Becky and little Fluffy.

one whom she had just lost for nearly five years ; entering her service about six months before her youngest little daughter was born, and a year before the child's father died. So this was the second parent whom the young ladies had lost since Becky had been with them, and now she was so dreadfully

· sorry that they, 'poor bairns,' as she kept on calling them this evening, should be, like her, without parents at all.

Becky sat alone to-night, and yet not really alone, for 'Fluffy,' a dog, and 'Polly,' a parrot, kept her company, and to call her companions dumb, with Polly present, would certainly have been a great libel upon one of them.

And surely, also, Fluffy was not quite dumb either! Those sympathetic appeals for notice said very plainly to Becky to-night that he was sorry for her sorrow, and was asking to be her comforter, should she have no better. They were old friends, these two, Becky and little Fluffy, and a very pretty story was attached to their friendship.

Fluffy had belonged to Becky's first mistress, an old lady, whose only little, loving companion he was, and a few days before she died she called the servant girl to her, whom she thought she could trust, and Fluffy loved best, and said, 'Becky, Fluffy is only a mongrel, and therefore, when I'm gone, people, may be, won't set much store by him, and he may want a home, so I want you to be a good, kind girl to him, and see after him for me, and not to let him be without a good home, if you can help it.' And her mistress, who was none of the richer sort, slipped two sovereigns into her hand to help Becky to keep the promise which she



GRANDFATHER.

been four months out of a situation, because nobody could be found to engage her with a dog, and on no account would she be parted from him ; but she had then saved a few months' wages, upon which, and Fluffy's little legacy, they had managed to subsist.

And it fortunately happened that when almost the last was spent, a tradesman had told her of Mrs. Tracey's vacant place, and, going after it with Fluffy,—they always went together, as Becky thought it was wiser to show him 'right off,' she said, and the walk did him good,—she was engaged at once. Fluffy was no obstacle here. 'True to a promise made to a dead mistress,' the lady argued, 'kind and compassionate towards a little dog, the girl is all the more likely to fulfil her duty properly towards me, her new mistress ;' and Mrs. Tracey had argued correctly, for in her service, during nearly five happy years, Becky had done her duty very thoroughly till this came,—the kind lady's sad death, that rendered Becky and Fluffy mistressless and homeless once more.

'But we won't despair, Fluffy dear,' she presently went on, assuming a much happier tone ; 'and if we do our duty we'll be took care of sure enough. I never read yet in the Bible anything against mongrels, and both our mistresses said you were a splendid little watch-dog, and called me a good, willing girl too, so that surely is a good character to

help us into another place.' But 'Poor bairns! poor bairns! poor bairns!' Becky, the next minute, echoed again, for once more her thoughts had wandered from herself and Fluffy to her two orphan young ladies, Miss Conny, aged twelve, and little Miss Lily, who was only four.

Their mother had left no money behind, and Becky had heard it said that they were to go, almost immediately, a long way off into the country to live with their grandparents.

Somehow or other the girl pitied them very much for this. 'Poor bairns!' she repeated again, and now made the sentence longer. 'A trying life it'll just be for you young things with such old fogeys.'

Polly roused herself once more, and listened very attentively to what Becky now said. 'Poor bairns!' she repeated, after a short pause; 'poor bairns! poor bairns! trying life with such old fogeys.'

She seemed much taken by the word 'fogeys,' and exercised herself over and over again in this long sentence.

That same evening Constance Tracey had been told what was to befall her and her little sister. The house was to be broken up, both servants dismissed (Mrs. Tracey had lately only been able to keep two), and she and Lilian were to go to their grandparents at Hopewell, who had kindly offered them a home.

The grandparents were the parents of their mother, and although, because they had always lived a long way off from them, the children had seen but very little of them, they had heard that they were very kind, and that their grandfather, who was very clever and wrote learned books, was very fond of children.

Conny was glad, on the whole, that their guardians had come to this decision for them, as she believed it would please her mother, but to-night the young girl was terribly sad, and felt as though she would never again be happy anywhere. It seemed so lonely, so dreadfully lonely without 'mother.' When father died it was very dreadful, but then her mother was left, and she had, she knew, child though she then was, to be brave herself, so as to comfort her, and there was the new little baby-sister of whom to help to take care and amuse, and they all lived together in a dear place called 'home,' which now was to be broken up. True, there was the baby-sister still, and oh! how thankful Conny was to remember this, for she loved Lily very, very dearly; but still they were to go so far away from *everybody* whom they knew and loved. Conny's school, her schoolfellows, all dear to her, were to be taken away from her, or rather she taken from them, and they were motherless!

'Poor bairns! poor bairns! poor bairns!' Becky

was saying for the last time, while Conny was sobbing herself to sleep.

When the child awoke next morning, and, as usual, Lily came into her bed to have a 'tuddle,' Conny threw her arms round the little one's neck,



'I will be your little mother now.'

and said, 'We are going away from here, darling, far away into the country, to stay with grandfather and grandmother, but I will be your little mother now, if you like, because you know you are my

little precious only baby-sister, born on my own birthday, and our own dear mother has gone right away from us to father, and it is very, very lonely for us here.'

Poor Conny! it was more lonely for her than for the little sister, and she was a most feeling girl, and now, when she clasped little Lily in her arms, and promised always to take care of her, she felt a great deal older than she had felt a week ago.

'Isn't it beautiful to have breakfast in bed?' the little girl then asked, apparently taking no heed of what Conny had just said, although thinking about it all, and how she should tell Lily, had kept the elder sister awake nearly half the long night.

'Pretty well,' was Conny's reply. She knew that they were having it there to save time, and to keep the dining-room tidy, because the furniture was to be sold, and an inventory of it taken, early that day, beginning with the dining-room furniture. It all seemed nothing but a miserably sad business to her.

'If we go away from here, will Fluffy and Polly come too?' Lily then asked. 'But of course they will,' the child continued; 'we couldn't leave *them* behind.'

'Becky says,' was Conny's answer, 'that as Fluffy belongs to her, and as grandfather and grandmother do not want an extra servant, and so

she can't go with us, Fluffy will go away with her, and she thinks perhaps they'll let Polly come with us to Hopewell.'

Lily now burst out crying.

'I don't want Becky and Fluffy not to go with us,' she said ; 'and of course, as Polly is my very own, she must.'

'Yes,' Conny said, 'I expect we shall be sure to take Polly.'

'But I want Becky and Fluffy too,' the little one replied.

How much, how many things did not Conny want! Everybody and everything she was leaving behind ; but *she* was trying to feel resigned to saying 'good-bye' to all, and now tried to comfort her little sister.

'Perhaps some day Becky will be able to come and see us, and bring Fluffy,' she said ; 'and I promise to do all I can to make them let us take Polly.'

'Thank you,' Lily said as she kissed her sister again. 'I don't think I *could* go without Polly, and I do hope Fluffy will be happy when he hasn't *any* of us.'

'Becky is always very good to him,' Conny answered ; 'and he is hers, and loves her very much indeed, so I expect he will be happy.'

Lily seemed comforted, but, after being silent for a few minutes, she said suddenly, 'I wonder whether I shall die soon, Conny!'

'What an odd thing to wonder,' was the reply.
'Why should you die soon?'

'Because I'm ill sometimes, and mother was ill before she died.'

Lily was a weakly little child, but such a dreadful thing as losing her had never entered Conny's head, and she loved her so very dearly, that to hear her now ask such a terrible question, when she was all she seemed to have left to her on earth, was too much for the elder sister, who, clasping the little darling in her arms, wiped hurriedly away tears that she could not keep back, and then answered, 'O no, darling pet! you are only a little, a very little ill now, and must not talk of such a thing as dying. We must live together till we are old, old women, I ever so old, as I am so much older now than you, and we must love one another very, very much.'

'Do you always love me very much?' Lily then asked.

'Always,' was the short but emphatic reply.

'Even when I'm as naughty as I can be?'

The little girl was often very wilful, and then Becky had a way of telling her that she was 'as naughty as she could be.' Becky had been partly house and partly nurse maid, since Mrs. Tracey only kept two servants, both of whom, she had told them, must look upon themselves in the light of general servants, the cook to help in the house-

work, and Becky to be useful in the nursery when required so to be, and little Lily had grown very fond of Becky, in spite of the occasional naughtinesses of which the girl very justly complained.

Lily slept in her elder sister's room, who latterly had generally put her to bed of an evening and helped her to get up in the morning.

'I hope you're not going to be naughty any more, Lily,' Conny said; 'but I always, always love you; and now that you are growing such a strong little girl, and haven't to be spoiled so much, you know, you must try very hard to leave off being naughty.'

'I will try,' said Lily.

'That's right; so now we'll finish breakfast quickly.'

And as the sisters ate the breakfast which was to be so nearly their last in the home in which Lily had been born and all her little life had been spent, Conny felt desperately sad. The girl had loved her mother, her home, its surroundings, all so fondly that it seemed a most dreadful wrench to be suddenly taken right away from everything that was so dear to her.

'You must be to me,' Lily soon began again, 'like Becky is to Fluffy.'

'How do you mean?'

'Why, she's promised never to be taken away from him, you know.'

'What a funny little girl you are! Why should I be taken away from you?'

'I don't know. P'raps you mightn't be, but I just thought p'raps you might, so you won't, will you?'

'Not if I can help it,' Conny said vehemently.

'Do you think Becky said, "Not if she could help it"?' Lily then asked.

'I expect she did,' was the answer; 'because we never can be quite positively sure about anything here, you know.'

'Well, I hope you will be able to help it, Conny dear, and won't ever go away from me at all,' little Lily said, as she clung to her sister very affectionately, 'because I do love you so much.'

'So do I love you, darling,' Conny replied. Lily was a dear little engaging child when she was good, but a more wilful one, when she chose to be naughty, Becky had once told Polly, with truth, it would be difficult to find.





CHAPTER II.

'POOR BAIRNS.'

TWO days later Conny and Lily Tracey started, very early in the morning, to travel to Hopewell, the pretty village in which their grandfather, the local celebrity, lived, this being also the name of his picturesque house.

It was a very long journey, and the little fragile Lily was very glad when their new country home was reached.

'Do you think, Conny,' she had asked in the train, 'that grandfather will be very much shocked because I haven't learned to read yet? Becky said he might be, as he's such a clever man.'

'I don't think he will be shocked at all,' Conny answered, 'as he knows you have not been strong,

and as you are so little still, too! Besides,' she continued, trying to comfort her little sister with words with which she had sought to bring home like comfort to herself, 'clever people are just the very people not to think others stupid, and mother always used to say that grandfather was kind and good to everybody, and that he seemed especially to love all children. Father was so fond of him too!'

And 'our children' had not talked to him for five minutes before the elder girl knew for certain that she had no need to speak reassuring words either to herself or little sister. Grandfather met them at the station, and during the long drive to Hopewell was love and kindness itself towards his orphan grandchildren.

'He told me such a lovely story after tea,' a very worn-out little Lily said that first evening to her sister, as she went to bed; 'and he told me I might come and sit upon his knee whenever I liked, and he would tell me more, and long ones, because it was very short to-night, as I was so tired. I think I shall like here,' she went on, 'and I am so glad Polly has come. Grandfather said he wouldn't have not had us bring her for anything. We needn't have been frightened to come here, Conny, need we?'

'No, that we needn't,' Conny replied. But she

would not sadden her little sister by telling her that, in spite of all the kindness, she herself could not help feeling very lonely and miserable without their mother. If only Conny had had a sister a little older, she could have talked better to her for her own comfort, but it was very good, also, for the elder girl to have this little one to study and to tend.

'Grandfather's just like Abraham,' Lily whispered to her sister, directly after breakfast next morning, —'the *image* of Abraham, in my Sunday picture book,'—and Lily was most emphatic when she said 'the image;' 'and I do so like that long dress he wears, and his beautiful beard.'

'That is his dressing-gown,' Conny answered. 'Grandmother says he generally wears dressing-gowns, in his study, most of the day till dinner, and that he has some beauties.'

The two grandparents were a strange contrast, —he a handsome, tall, well-built, aristocratic-looking man; she a thoroughly countrified old lady. But both had loving, affectionate hearts, were dearly fond of one another, and, as they expressed it, 'of all young people,' and were most glad to have their grand-daughters come to live with them.

Of an afternoon it was granny's custom to feel tired, and, whilst knitting, to fall asleep in her

large, high-backed arm-chair that stood in the morning-room, and here, also, Polly's stand was very often placed. Polly seemed to have taken to granny, and this pleased the old lady very much, and when she knitted and slept of an afternoon, or, as Conny put it, slept and knitted, for the girl declared that there was a great deal more sleeping than knitting then accomplished, Polly liked to be brought as near to 'the granny' as possible.

'I expect,' Lily said, 'Polly wants to watch the knitting.'

'I expect,' Conny replied, 'she wants to be up to some sort of mischief.'

Conny soon learned the little rules and regulations of Hopewell, and would generally, after lunch, go to the morning-room and arrange comfortably granny's chair, ready for her nap. This was the time that little Lily selected to beg grandfather for a story, so Conny had nothing then to do for her little sister, and would often ask granny to allow her to read her off to sleep, which the old lady seemed to like her to do very much. So, while Lily was with grandfather in his study, Conny and Polly kept granny company in the morning-room.

But one day, about a week after the Traceys had arrived, Polly made a most dreadful mistake.



Polly made a most dreadful mistake.

Conny, as usual, fetched her book, with which she had now read her grandmother to sleep four days running, and then sat close beside her to her right, because Polly occupied the left-hand side.

Polly seemed inclined to be very talkative this afternoon, and had tried to interrupt the reading several times. But Conny read on, and granny began to get sleepy, and no one took any notice of the bird.

But presently she seemed determined to be heard, and repeated the same words over and over again. ‘Poor bairns !’ she said ; ‘poor bairns ! poor bairns !’

Granny looked round. ‘Poor bairns !’ she went on ; ‘trying life to be with such old fogeys ! *Such old fogeys !*’ she turned round to shriek in poor granny’s ear, who could not mistake the words.

‘Go on, Conny,’ she said, when the girl stopped her reading.

And Conny began to read again, but she was obliged to leave off to burst out laughing.

‘Old, old fogeys !’ Polly continued, quite delighted with herself ; but Conny thought it dreadful of the parrot to say such things, and could not think where she had picked up the word ‘fogeys.’ But still she said it so funnily that Conny went on laughing, wondering more and more where Polly could have learned this lesson, for Conny knew nothing of the last one that she had received

from Becky. The girl was afraid to look up, and then she heard her grandmother sigh as though she felt hurt.

'Old, old fogeys!' the shrieking creature repeated.
'Poor bairns! trying life! old, *old* fogeys!'

'Who taught your bird to speak?' grandmother asked at last.

'Mother, Becky, Lily, and I,' Conny replied; 'but I think she must teach herself some things,' she continued, by way of excuse.

'I fancy a parrot must always hear a word or sentence several times before it learns to say or repeat it,' the old lady answered; 'and "fogeys" is not at all a pretty word. I wonder who taught that to it!'

Constance Tracey could now look her grandmother full in the face.

'I did not,' she answered, 'and I am sure Lily did not either, as she does not know the word even. I can't think how Polly learned it!'

'Old fogeys! old, old fogeys!' the bird shrieked again, evidently delighted with her cleverness; and then, when Conny began to scold her for the sentence, she added, 'Cross old fogeys! cross, cross old fogeys!' She knew well what cross meant.

The bird had interrupted the reading, and grandmother's sleep, for the rest of that afternoon. Grandmother evidently did not at all like to be

called an 'old fogey,' even by a parrot, and quite seemed to think that the word was applied to herself.

Conny could see how much the kind old lady was vexed, and she could not think how they were now to stop the bird from repeating the objectionable word on future occasions.

And grandmother, too, had made Polly so very welcome at Hopewell, and had been so kind to her, that it seemed also ungrateful of the parrot; but Polly knew nothing of ingratitude, or of giving pain, or what 'old fogey' meant at all.

Oh, Becky, Becky, what a pity it was that you let Polly overhear that sentence! You must, we must be so very careful what we say, for we never know when a Polly, or, worse still, when any child will overhear, and learn, something that is naughty or unkind.

Kind-hearted Becky would not have sent sorrow to Hopewell for all the world, and yet with her this mischief had originated; and, as Conny looked at her granny's sad face, she wondered where and when it would all end, for Polly would not be dictated to, would not drop a conversation to please others if she wished to continue it.

It was not because the bird had spoken those words that the old lady was so sad, but it was because, unkind and disrespectful, she fancied they

had been spoken of her husband and herself, and she could not tell by whom. And Conny's laugh had seemed somewhat unkind too, but the girl had ceased to laugh now, and also looked sad.

Granny did not knit again. She sat with her eyes closed, thinking and wondering what it all meant, and whether the bird spoke truly, and 'the bairns' were to be pitied; whether it was an unkindness, instead of a kindness, to have brought two 'such young things' here, right away into the country, to live alone with two old people, and whether they might not have done better for them by leaving them alone. Perhaps the bird was right, and they were to be pitied !

'What do you think, husband?' she asked later on, when grandfather came in from the garden. Though it was the depth of winter, he just put on a warm coat and warm gloves, and still gardened. Books and flowers, flowers and books, these were what he loved, and they occupied so much of his time, giving him pleasure in turn. 'What do you think, husband? Was it a selfishness to bring them here?'

He looked grave. This way of putting the matter had never suggested itself to him. They had a small fortune, this husband and wife, and at both their deaths it would have come to Mrs. Tracey had she lived, and failing her it was left to her

children, their grandchildren, Constance and Lilian, and what was more natural than that they should wish to have them to come and live with, and be provided for by, them during their lifetime, when their mother died. The beautiful house at Hope-



He became serious too.

well belonged to Dr. and Mrs. Rita, and here they could provide very comfortably for the children; but would they have been happier elsewhere?

This was what the kind old lady asked her

husband so seriously, that he became serious too. Perhaps, she told him, the children might have been offered a home in their father's brother-in-law's family if they had not been so quick, and there the Traceys would have had young companions of their own age, little Lily a cousin a few months older than herself, and so like her, that many people, who had seen them both, had said that they might easily pass for twins.

'Would they perhaps have been happier and better off there?' Mrs. Rita went on to ask ; and the dear Doctor too looked careworn when he answered, 'Perhaps they would.'

'But no,' he added quickly, for at Mrs. Tracey's sick-bed he had met the brother-in-law, who had said that he would be glad, if it were needed, to offer a home to one of his nieces, providing somebody else took the other.

'A home to one! No, Dorothy,' the Doctor then said very happily, 'we have done rightly towards the children; we have kept them together, and it would have been bitter grief to separate them, and, please God, we will now see that they have a good education, and as happy a home as we can possibly provide. But what gives you these troubled thoughts all of a sudden?'

Mrs. Rita looked more than half ashamed of herself when she told the story of the parrot. It

seemed absurd to have been made so sad because a parrot had said ‘Poor bairns!’ and ‘Trying life to be with such old fogeys.’ And perhaps Polly had not meant them by the ‘old fogeys’ after all.

Her husband could not help smiling, owned that it was strange of the parrot, but begged her to trouble herself no more about such rubbish, and to be comforted with the thought that they were doing all their duty, and their very best, and meant to make their grandchildren as happy as they could.

‘We’ve kept them together, Dorothy,’ he repeated; ‘and Mary would have grieved much to think that they should be separated, fond of one another as they are. Why, Conny is like a little mother to Lily.’

‘They are dear children,’ was grandmother’s next remark; ‘but I am afraid poor little Lily has a dreadful temper of her own, which will bring her into trouble as she grows older, if she does not try to correct it soon.’

‘Conny told me yesterday,’ their grandfather then said, ‘that Lily had always been such a very delicate little child that until quite lately she had never been thwarted in anything; but that their mother had said, only a few weeks before she died, that now the child was so much better she meant regularly to take her in hand, and do all she could to make a better-behaved child of her; and Conny cried,’ he said, ‘as she added, “And then dear mother was ill

and died, and Becky and I spoiled Lily more than any one had ever spoiled her before.'"

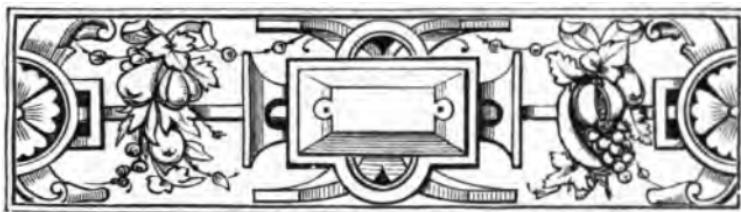
The good Doctor and his wife then separated, he to return to his study and his books, and she to go to her room to prepare for dinner, but as she heard, from there, little Lily's voice pealing with laughter, while she talked to her parrot down-stairs, and distinguished the parrot's voice loud in reply, the words would echo in her heart and memory, 'Poor bairns! Trying life to be with *such* old fogeys!' and she could not quite shake off the sadness that these words had brought to her.

Meanwhile Becky, who had taught the naughty lesson, had written to tell Miss Constance that she and Fluffy had been very fortunate this time, and that she had already been engaged by a lady and gentleman, to whom their grandfather had kindly written for her, and that Fluffy, of course, had gone too, and seemed to be getting happier and 'a bit at home' again, and that the master was so kind, he had given her Fluffy's new licence, as their mother had always done. 'I think *we* shall be very comfortable here,' Becky wrote. It was always 'we' with Becky. 'We,' Fluffy and herself, went to service; "'we" are comfortable;'" "our" characters suited;'" "we" hope we shall stay.' Becky and Fluffy were quite one, and in taking, or leaving, a situation the dog was always thought of before herself.

There was only one fellow-servant, the girl also told Conny, and she liked dogs, and thought one very 'nice company' and great protection for the kitchen.

The letter wound up with sending much love for 'Miss Lily and her bird, from Becky and Fluffy,' and with this postscript: 'We both miss you all three *dreadful*, and Polly's talk very much.' Constance and Lily were delighted to receive the good news, and the little girl at once carried them, with the message of Becky's and Fluff's love, to Polly.

Mrs. Rita was also very glad indeed to hear that Becky and her dog had found another place, but although she read in her letter the reference and message to Polly, she never once thought of Becky as the possible instructress of the naughty words the bird had learned. Had she done so, she would very likely only have smiled and have thought it natural for Becky not to like her young ladies to go so far away from her to live with two old people, and have wondered at the bird's cleverness in remembering her lesson so well, but, like so many of us, granny went on worrying and fidgeting when there was nothing really worth worrying at all about, and, dreadful to relate, the more Polly annoyed Mrs. Rita by her sayings, so much the oftener she seemed to repeat them.



CHAPTER III.

'LITTLE MOTHER.'

 H, Conny,' Lily said a few days later, ' I do like here so much ! and mustn't it be lovely when there are heaps of flowers here, and no snow like now, though I think the snow's beautiful, but grandfather says there are such a number of flowers in the summer. When will summer be ?'

'Not for five or six months,' her sister replied. 'We are only a few weeks past Christmas.'

'And I do like this house,' the little girl went on ; 'it has ever so many more rooms than ours used to have in London, and they are so large ; and isn't it funny that that other house, that seems so near, over the fence, is such a long way, when we have to go

round the road to the turning. What is the name of the house ?'

'Dovecot.'

'Oh, how pretty ! And can't we see the summer-house well from our bedroom window ?'

'Yes,' Conny answered ; 'and grandfather thinks that Ella Lovell, who lives there, will come and see us again to-day or to-morrow. She often came when we weren't here even, to see, and have afternoon tea with, grandfather and grandmother. She is very fond of them, and grandfather lends her books, and teaches her things, because she wants to be very clever.'

'How old is she, Conny ?'

'A few months older than I am.'

'Oh, what a pity she hasn't a little sister like me ! then she could come to tea too.'

'I thought the same thing,' Conny replied ; 'but I daresay grandfather will be able to find a little companion somewhere or other for you.'

It was generally to grandfather that the children had learned to look for what they wanted, as he was so much stronger and much more active than their grandmother.

'I wish we could have a summer-house like Ella has got,' Lily then said, 'with a table and chair and all that inside. Do you think grandfather would

have us one made? It would be very convenient if he would.'

Lily had not only a great deal to say for herself, but, from being so much with her mother and elder sister, a very old-fashioned way of saying it all.

'Perhaps he will, some day,' Conny answered.



Hopewell.

Dovecot.

The little girl sat quite still for a few minutes, as though deep in thought.

'We're not a bit frightened of grandfather, are we,' she then asked suddenly, 'because he's clever? And he doesn't seem anything at all to be afraid of either, does he?'

'Not an atom,' Conny replied. 'And isn't it kind of him to say he'll teach you to read himself, and not let you go to school yet for a long time?'

'But I want to go to school,' Lily said, 'if you do.'

'But you see, as I'm so much older than you are, we should not learn together, or, perhaps, even be in the same room, so it will be ever so much nicer for you to learn here at home with grandfather.'

Lily pouted.

'And in school,' Conny went on, 'you would have to do a number of lessons, but grandfather would only give you a very few, and afterwards you could play all the time till I came home.'

'Should you stay out very long?'

'Not longer than I could help, darling; I shall always want to hurry back to you.'

'I shouldn't like you to stay out long,' the little girl said, clambering on to her sister's lap, 'because, don't you know, you're my "little mother"?'

Conny did know it, and when, a week later, she went to school, perhaps no real mother had ever been more anxious to return to her child, however long a time she might have been away from her, than was the 'little mother' to hurry home to her pet.

And she had some news, too, for Lily that first day. Ella, from 'next door between the trees,'

went to the same school, and had walked home with Conny, and given her a little note, from her mother, to give to their grandmother, in which she was invited, on Saturday afternoon, to go to tea at Dovecot.

'And shall you go, do you think?' Lily asked, almost beginning to cry.

Conny kissed her little sister. Was she, perhaps, without knowing that she did so, going on with the spoiling that had done the child already so much harm?

'I said,' she replied, 'that as I had you at home I would rather not come if she did not mind.'

Lily looked pleased.

'But then Ella said,' Conny went on, 'that she wanted me to come very much, and as her mother was very fond of little girls like you, she should ask her to send another letter inviting you to go too, so we shall both be able to go.'

Lily was very glad now.

'And we shall see how here looks from there,' the little girl said; 'won't that be fun? But I know I shan't like their house as much as ours, as they haven't steps leading up to it.'

The high flight of steps leading up to the verandah at Hopewell, was a source of great delight to little Lily Tracey.

Ever since the sisters had arrived, there had been great curiosity about the neighbour house, into which they had never yet been taken, and not only was it such a very close neighbour to Hopewell, but the only house, except poor cottages, for several miles round, and it was most unselfish of Conny to, at first, refuse the welcome invitation, for she longed very much for a friend of her own age, and thought, somehow, that when she knew Ella better she would be able to make a real friend of her.

Though Constance Tracey was not quite thirteen, the child had had a saddened life. Before she was nine her father died, and the naturally unselfish little girl, even at that age, had laid herself out very thoroughly to try to comfort her mother, and in her little way to fill, as far as she could, her father's place, and that also of two little brothers who had before then been called away from them. Then, too, Conny was anxious about something else, for a baby-sister had been given to her on her very own birthday, six months before her father's death, and often when she heard that she was ailing, she feared that she might 'be going to be sent for too,' as she would explain to Becky when she asked why she was sitting all alone and crying. Conny seldom cried when her mother was present, for fear of adding to her griefs.

Then just as Lily was growing stronger another terrible grief came, for it was then that her mother 'was called away.' And again Conny felt that she must not even indulge in grief, except very seldom, for Lily was almost always with her, and she wanted to cheer up the little girl, not to make her sad; as usual, thinking last of herself and first of others.

And now, at Hopewell, 'little mother' had one more anxiety. Lily was very naughty sometimes, strangely so for so small a child, defiantly and wilfully disobedient, when Conny would strive so hard to keep her from being naughty and offending the grandparents, remembering all the time how Becky had prophesied that Miss Lily's temper would bring her into some great trouble some day, if she didn't try to curb it.

Conny could not bear her grandfather or grandmother to know that Lily was so naughty, and therefore indulged and humoured her to 'keep her good,' as she said to herself, but by so doing really made matters a good deal worse.

The letter of invitation came for Lily to accompany her sister to Dovecot between three and four o'clock on the following Saturday.

They were shown, when they arrived, into Ella's summer-house. And, comfortable as it had been made, with chairs and tables, amongst them a

writing-table and large arm-chair, 'it ought,' Conny said, 'to be called a winter house instead of a summer one.' It had also a little stove in which burned a cheerful little fire.

'That,' Lily remarked, 'is the smoke that we've seen come up from the garden.' And then the roof



Ella was in her summer-house.

was so securely thatched that no rain or snow ever came through.'

Ella was in her summer-house, and sitting in a most funny position, with her legs perched upon a high stool, so that her knees formed themselves almost into another table. She was so busy that,

for a moment, she did not observe her visitors. Ella was writing on some long paper.

'This is my study, my very own,' she explained to her friends; 'and here I sit and write because it is so quiet.'

'What are you writing?' Constance asked. 'You seem to be filling a number of sheets of paper.'

'I am writing a book,' she said in a very serious tone of voice; 'and as I can write better here than anywhere else, and want to finish it soon, mother lets me sit here whenever I like.'

'It is cosy,' Conny replied; 'but as only your mother and the servants are in the house, I should not think there was much noise there,' she went on, smiling as she spoke.

'My mother is so kind to me,' Ella then said.

She was an only child, and had an only child's many privileges. Conny had really been an only child also for some years, but, very fortunately for her, had, amid her sorrows, poor child, received perhaps little of the spoiling that so often comes to only children, and spoils their characters and dispositions, and now her character was a remarkably sweet one.

'Oh, but just look there!' Lily presently screamed out. 'How did they get in? There are two rats!'

'I know there are,' Ella replied quietly; 'and they come here every day to see me, and I always bring plenty of food for them, and they do not eat

my papers, or damage my table, at all. I have just to keep my books out of their way, as they are a little fond of nibbling at them. They have been here ever since they were baby rats, and are not one atom afraid of me now.'

'But aren't you afraid of them?' Lily asked, clinging to her sister as she spoke.

'No; why should I be? They do not want to hurt me, and know quite well, by now, that I do not want to hurt them. I just have to be careful that puss does not get in here, and they are so happy and comfortable, that they sometimes go to sleep on the ledge just above my table while I am writing.'

Conny could not help feeling very glad that she had come to live so near to Ella Lovell, as she had wanted so very much to have a friend of her own age, for Ella seemed to be a most agreeable and original one. The Traceys had heard of all sorts of animals being tamed, and they themselves knew how happy a conversation with Lily's Polly could make them, and how Becky loved Fluffy, but to have two wild rats for friends seemed very funny, and they thought it was very clever of Ella to have managed to tame, and make them know and like her, and wonderfully clever of her, just a few months older than Conny only, to be writing a book.

Ella soon led her friends out of the summer-house to find her mother, who was then in the drawing-

room of the 'real house,' as Lily called Dovecot in contradistinction to the 'lovely summer-house' that seemed almost to be like Ella's home.

'How are your grandparents, dear?' Mrs. Lovell asked.

'Grandmother is not quite well, but grandfather is very well indeed, thank you,' Conny replied, and then gave some kind, polite messages, with which she had been entrusted by them.

'Do you know,' Ella then said, 'I hope you won't mind, but I often call your grandfather "grandfather" too. He said I might if I liked, and I am sure I am quite as fond of him as if he were my real grandfather, but I think everybody is; certainly all the children are who know him, for he is so good and kind to them all, and then of course he knows everything, so it is beautiful to be able to ask *him* questions.'

The Traceys had already learned to be dearly fond of their grandfather, and were delighted now to listen to his praises. They would soon find that wherever they went they would hear these sounded, for Dr. Rita was a universal favourite.

Kind and gentle towards little children, the poorest and youngest among whom he would take pains to instruct himself, a friend to the friendless, the best of advisers to all who sought and needed his advice, thoroughly upright, truth-loving, and sincere, he

seemed to be a man of almost spotless character, whom to know was to love, respect, and venerate.

And, after spending a most enjoyable afternoon at Dovecot, it was such a pleasure to little Lily to run home and tell this grandfather all that they had seen, and heard, and done, knowing how the account of their doings would really interest him.





CHAPTER IV.

ELLA'S ADVENTURE.

AFEW months later Ella was returning from school a rather 'roundabout' way. She had worked very hard at a difficult subject, and felt that a blow across one of the fields would do her good, so took the walk. She had nearly come to the end of the field, and was now hastening home, because the wind, which had been gradually rising more and more, began to blow very hard indeed. She was close to a hedge, upon the opposite side of which was a pathway, and here she suddenly heard very rapid footsteps. She stood still to listen.

'Oh, my hat!' she then heard a voice exclaim softly, and she could tell that it was a woman who had spoken in that hushed voice. 'I must

pick it up, Jo,' she went on to say, 'or maybe they'll trace us by it ; it's still broad daylight, you know.'

'Quick, quick, then !' was the answer, and now it was a man who spoke ; 'we daren't lose time ;' and Ella, at this moment peeping through the hedge, saw a man and woman hurrying along, both having ghastly pale faces, the woman especially, whose hair had become loose and had fallen over her shoulders.

They looked terribly afraid of somebody or something, as though they were almost escaping for their very lives ; yet they still had the appearance of a gentleman and lady. The wind seemed very boisterous just at that corner, Ella thought, for the man too held on his hat for fear of losing it.

'I don't think, Jo,' the woman began again, 'that I can go much farther ; I feel so tired, so faint. Where are we running to ? Where are we going, do you know at all ?'

'The last sign-post was marked "Hopewell," he replied ; 'that's all I know. But hush, dearest, some one may be near and hear you speak. Try to keep on just a little longer, if you can, and soon we may find some place of shelter, some corner in which we can hide and rest for the night ; but not here, my dear, there is no place here where we could be concealed. But hark !' he then whispered ; 'I hear somebody, and if I am found now I am lost.'



'I must pick it up, Jo.'

D

It was Ella whom he had heard, for she had started off running, so as to meet this couple at the corner, and see if she could not render *some* assistance to the poor tired woman. They paused, just as Ella slipped round the hedge and met them.

'What is the matter?' she asked in the most simple manner; 'why are you running so quickly? Have you to catch a train?'

She did not really fancy that they had, but could not think what else to ask.

'Is there a station near?' the man then questioned, while the woman looked round nervously, 'because if so we should like to catch a train;' and almost mechanically, as he spoke, he put his hand into his pocket to feel what money was there towards railway fares. 'But we must not wait,' he went on; 'we are bound to hurry.'

'Are you running away from somebody?' Ella then asked, still standing in their way.

'Yes, child,' the woman answered; 'so pray do not detain us.'

'But why are you running away?' Ella still persisted; 'does anybody you know want to do you any harm?'

Again the woman looked round, and Ella saw now that she was trembling.

'I thought I heard some one else!' she then said to the man. 'We must go on, we dare not wait; but

oh, I am so tired ! You did not answer the question we asked, child,' she added. 'Is there a station near ?'

'Not nearer than two miles,' was Ella's answer, and you look so tired. But,' she went on, 'I live very near here, and if you will come home with me and rest, I am sure my mother would be very glad for you to do so ; please come back with me,' she pleaded.

'Impossible!' the man answered. 'We are hiding,' he then whispered,—'making our escape ;' and somehow or other, as he spoke, he felt that he could trust this young girl with his dreadful secret, and that she would be sorry for himself and wife. 'We are hiding,' he went on ; 'I am running away from the police, who are after me, and would put me in prison if they could find me.'

'The police ? Prison ?' Ella asked in amazement.

'Yes,' was the answer. 'I have committed a crime, my child, that would imprison me for many months.'

Ella's countenance fell. 'But you are not wicked, I am sure,' she said ; 'and you,' she continued, speaking to the woman, 'cannot have committed a crime ? —you cannot be afraid of going to prison ?'

'No ; it is for me that she has come,' her husband replied. 'She is so brave and good, that she sticks by, and escapes with, me ; but we thought they were on

the track some time since, and any moment they may be up to us, so let us pass on before it is too late, and if you hear of search being made for us, by all that you hold most dear, I beg you not to betray us.'

Of course, had they chosen, they could have easily brushed past Ella, but while she stood in their pathway they somehow felt bound to halt.

' You are much too tired to run, or even to walk, any farther to-night,' Ella said to the woman ; ' so do come home with me,' she urged. ' My mother is so kind that I am sure she would say you ought to rest at our house.'

' Impossible ! ' the man said again ; ' thank you, though, dear child, a thousand times thank you, for your kindness—to a thief,' he added with a sigh. ' But,' now frightened by the terribly exhausted look of his wife, he added, ' if you know of any spot, any unoccupied stable or barn, about here where we could hide and rest for an hour or so, we should be thankful and glad to go. But we could not, we dare not, go to a house. You do not know what you are offering us ; no one, however kind, however good, would take us in like this. And should the police track us to the house, and they are so clever now, the servants might betray us.'

' Yes,' Ella answered ; ' and my mother never says what is untrue, so if they came and questioned her, she would not know what to answer ; but,' she con-

tinued, 'I have a better hiding-place than a stable, of my very own, out of doors, a summer-house that quite belongs to me, and if you like to go there I will shut you in, and the servants shall know nothing about it, and if I see the police coming, I will go somewhere and hide too, so that they cannot ask me if I have seen you. Oh, do, do come!' Ella now entreated, catching hold of the woman's hand and trying to lead her along. 'Why,' she continued 'you are so dreadfully tired that you could hardly walk even to our house now.'

'No, I could not, unless it is quite near,' was the reply of a thoroughly worn-out, exhausted woman. 'But how could we get to your summer-house?' she then asked, ready now to grasp at the offer of that shelter of peril, from a hopeless feeling of utter prostration and incapacity to find her way elsewhere. 'Suppose we were seen!' she continued; 'what—what then?'

'I will manage that you are not seen,' Ella said quickly, so glad for their sakes to have gained her point. 'Fortunately there is a back way to my summer-house, and then there is a key to it also, so that you could lock yourselves in. Oh, but,' she added quickly, looking very grave as she spoke, 'I think I had better lock you in instead, as the servants generally go to the summer-house every evening to see that it is all right, and lock the door; and if you

had locked the door yourselves, I could not say that I had, and they might go to see and hear sounds, but if I showed them the key, and said that it was all right, and I did not want my summer-house opened any more this evening, I am sure I could satisfy and keep them away.'

The man looked anything but satisfied himself with this arrangement. It seemed most unsafe to be fastened in, without the chance of making their escape, should they be suddenly surprised from the garden, but Ella assured them that the key should not pass out of her hands, and that she would take every precaution to hide them in safety.

It seemed a terrible risk to run, but meanwhile time was rapidly slipping by; if pursued, their pursuers might have gained much ground even while they had been talking, and the poor woman was now so tired that she could hardly stand without her husband's support.

Ella's strict regard for truth struck the poor fugitive very forcibly, and, daring thing though it seemed to be, to trust themselves to this young girl's protection, and, from the outside, to be locked, by her, in a summer-house, when he looked at his poor, faithful, helpless wife, and saw no other door of help open to her, he determined to accept succour at the kind hands of the young girl, who offered it in the best way that she saw fit to.

'But we must start off again very early in the morning,' the man said, as they went along.

'What time?' Ella asked. 'I have a watch of my own, and will let you out at any time you like to settle.'

'About three,' he answered, 'or as soon after that as possible.'

'All right,' Ella said quickly, just beginning to think that it would be very difficult for her, who never had a secret from her mother, to keep so important a one as this entirely away from her.

'And you are not afraid to give shelter to a thief?' the man then asked.

'No,' was the reply; 'because you do not wish to steal anything from us, do you? and you look as though you were very sorry now that you have stolen anything at all, and God forgives people when they are sorry for their sins, so how could I judge you? Of course I couldn't.'

'I could not be more sorry than you, a child still, have even helped me to become by your kindness,' the man replied, while his wife wept; 'and if,' he went on, 'I get safe through this, which I beg you to pray your God, in your prayers to-night, that I may, I'll try my best and hardest to be in future as good a man as I can.'

'But my God is your God too, isn't He?' Ella whispered, and then bade them wait while she ran

round the corner to see that all was safe, and to open the summer-house ready to receive them.

When she came back, the man, who had looked, she had thought when she first saw him, very hard-faced, was also wiping his eyes.

'I forgot to ask you,' she then said rapidly, addressing the wife, 'whether you mind rats at all; because there are some in there, and I should not know how to turn them out, as they are great friends of mine; and know that I always like them to come whenever they want to do so.'

Rats seemed to be such very small things to fear after the awful dread that had assailed them, and the chance of some sort of rest to the poor, thoroughly exhausted woman was so refreshing, that she most readily said she had no fear of them.

As Mrs. Lovell was out, and the servants were now shut in the kitchen, which was in the front of the house, Ella found the coast quite clear, and was able to return at once to lead her newly-made friends to her summer-house.

But then a new difficulty presented itself to the thoughtful girl.

The woman was so faint, and most likely very hungry too, and she could not be so inhospitable as to shelter them for the night and offer them nothing to eat; but how was she to convey food to them without the servants seeing that she did so?

How dreadful it is to have a secret 'to keep,' she said to herself, as she walked away from the summer-house with the key of the door in her pocket, which she had locked from the outside; 'and it must be rather dreadful for them to be locked in too,' she continued. 'Oh, how I wish I could tell Conny all about it! but I promised not to say a word to anybody, and of course it is safer not to do so.'

She had brought her manuscript away, and now carried it up into her room. She had a reason for so doing.

'I may come back once to see you,' Ella had said, as she shook hands with her concealed fugitives and left them; 'and so that you shall not be frightened, or think it is anybody else, I will just give a little cough outside before I put the key in the door.'

Ella would not say that she hoped to bring them some refreshment, for fear she should not be able to accomplish so difficult an undertaking, and only disappoint them. 'I hope you will be a little comfortable,' she had added. 'There is one arm-chair.'

The man's answer had been that he would be more comfortable than he deserved to be, but that his poor wife well deserved comforts, and for her dear sake he thanked their young benefactress very gratefully for all that she had done, and was doing, for them.

'Emma,' she pleaded, half an hour later, speaking to the housemaid, 'will you do me a favour? Mother is not coming home for tea to-day, and I want you to put mine on a tray for me to carry myself into the summer-house. I shall want my own little lamp, too, and I will carry that out first.'

'I should have thought, Miss Ella,' the girl replied, 'that it would be more cosy for you in-doors to-night by the fire, but of course if you prefer your tea in your summer-house, you needn't make such a great favour of it, and I'll carry it out there for you with pleasure.'

'But, Emma, please,' poor Ella answered, 'I'd rather carry it out myself, if I may, and the lamp too; and would you mind asking cook to give me a very nice tea with something with it, for tea and supper together?'

Ella spoke so coaxingly that the servant said she would see what she could do.

'I suppose, miss,' she answered, 'you've invited the rats to tea with you, and are afraid, if we carry the tea out, we shall frighten them away.'

Ella made no answer to this remark. It was not for rats that she was providing this tea and supper in one, but for two people, and in order to give it them she meant to go without herself.

'Miss Ella has strange fancies since she took to that writing,' Emma mused, as she set to work to

make ready the tea ; 'but I'd rather, by far, if she must have the tea out there, put it ready properly for her, but if it's those rats she's considering it's not likely I shall be able to move her.'

And Ella's care for her rats saved her from further suspicion.

'I'll carry the lamp, at all events, to outside for you, Miss Ella,' the girl then said. 'That need not disturb your company.'

'I'd rather do everything myself, please,' Ella said emphatically.

What she was undertaking was, she knew, full of peril, for even if she succeeded in getting the lamp and tray out safely, there would be the waiting for it and bringing it back. The waiting for it would be all right, because, of course, the servants would be thinking that she was having her tea ; but if, meanwhile, they came to ask if she had all she required, they would find the door locked, for, of course, when there she must lock it from the inside, and this would astonish them, as she never locked herself in the summer-house.

But Ella was too brave to draw back now, and she could not leave that poor, faint woman all night without food, let it cost her what it might safely to get it to her.

At last the tea-table was arranged, and Ella was apologizing for only venturing to bring one cup

and saucer for them both, but they were so anxious to have the tea over, the tea-things removed, and the door safely locked once more, with Ella on the other side of it, for fear she should be sought there, that they would have been glad to put up with a much greater inconvenience, and partook of the repast she had so kindly provided for them with much gratitude but all possible haste. The man felt most deeply the kind actions of the young girl, which went much farther to make him truly penitent for his hasty wrong-doing than would have a life long imprisonment.

But Ella passed a terribly anxious night. This was the very first deception that she had ever practised all her life, and to have hidden a man, who called himself a criminal, and his wife, on her mother's property, the fact known only to herself, was an appalling thought. Not that Ella feared he would do any harm here, however; she had too much good faith in him, and this was rightly bestowed, for his only longing now was to escape from punishment this time, and then to live an upright, honest life.

'An angel,' he whispered to his wife, as the key turned in the door, and shut them in alone once more,—'an angel sent, for your sake, to befriend us; and for her to wait upon me, too! But I wasn't always thus, was I? And you're as good as she

is,—ay, much too good thus to have escaped with me to save me.'

When Ella went to her room that evening, she determined not to undress or go properly to bed, for fear she should oversleep herself and not be



Worn out by the excitement of the evening.

ready to let out the man and woman at the time appointed. She did not know their surname, had never thought of asking, but the woman had told her, strange to say, that her Christian name was 'Ella.'

'I'll look over my manuscript,' the girl had said to herself, 'and try to think what to write next ;' but she had not tried to do so for many minutes, before, worn out by the excitement of the evening, her head fell upon her pillow, buried in her foolscap, and she was fast asleep.

But, anyhow, Ella could not have centred her mind on her story to-night. She was very ill at ease. Thoroughly truth-loving and truth-telling, it seemed, in the middle of the night, to be a most terrible secret that she was keeping from her mother ; but as she had promised to keep the matter quite secret from every one, how could she have gone from her word? And her chief reason for not having wished even to tell her mother had been that she should have no difficulty in answering the police, should they call there to make inquiries for a fugitive man and woman.

Ella was rather a remarkable-looking girl. Her gowns were generally made quite plainly, and her large quantity of black hair was loosely tied up, so as to hang over her neck and shoulders. Sometimes, because it was so thick, she also wore a net over it.

'Is that you, Ella?' her mother asked, when, at a quarter to three o'clock next morning, she heard a movement in her daughter's room, for Ella had awoke betimes. The girl at first made no response, so the question was repeated.

'Yes, mother,' she replied. 'I hope I did not wake you ;' and she spoke in so husky a voice that her mother feared she was ill, and asked if this were the case.

'No, thank you, mother dear,' she answered quickly ; 'but I am so sorry I woke you. Do you think you will soon go to sleep again ? Shall I come and shut your door ?'

Ella had left hers open purposely, and a lamp dimly burning. This lamp she could always burn at night when she liked, and, besides her matches, she had put in readiness a candle, that had a shade to it, to carry out into the back-garden in the early morning. She knew she would have the back door to open, but this had a very easy bolt, and she had practised moving it quietly over-night. Never before had the girl so longed for her mother to be fast asleep. She lay quite still again for about twenty minutes, then made one other effort to get up.

But, 'Ella,' her mother soon called out again, 'are you not well to-night, dear, that you are so restless ? Will you come into my bed, or shall I come to you for a few minutes ? Are you afraid of the lightning ? It is certainly very strange that we should have a thunderstorm on a cold winter's night.'

'I do not mind it, thank you,' Ella said. She

had hardly noticed it, but now she began to think that it would be dreadful for them to start off in a thunderstorm.

'I am all right, thank you, mother dear,' she went on, 'and do not care to come into your bed, but prefer to stay here, but please let me shut your door ;' and, jumping out of bed, Ella ran across the passage and did close it. If it pleased her so to do, her mother had no objection, but she did not mean to go to sleep again so long as her child was restless.

She had heard her tossing about before during the night. Ella had really acted unwisely in leaving her door open.

The girl then went to lie down again for about another quarter of an hour or twenty minutes.

'He said three o'clock, or as soon after that as I could come,' she thought, 'and I had better give mother time to get quite to sleep again before I attempt to move about once more. And then, as her door is quite shut now, perhaps she will not hear me ; but this letting them out is dreadful ! How I wish now they had the key themselves !'

Besides having passed so restless a night, there was another reason why Ella should feel faint. She had eaten nothing since her early dinner, having foregone her tea and supper that two other people might partake of it instead.

The other Ella had not realized this, or would

have been more difficult to persuade to make the repast. As it was, her great anxiety had been to take what the kind young lady was so anxious for her to have as quickly as possible, so that they might be left in darkness, and therefore, as she thought, in greater safety.

Half an hour later the girl once more rose very quietly from her bed, lighted the candle, which had a shade, that she had put in readiness ; very gently opened her door, and began, as softly as she could, in her bedroom slippers, to descend the stairs.

And this time no mother seemed to be aroused, for no mother spoke to her.

Fortunately, all the servants slept in rooms at the top of the house, and only that of the man, whom it was very difficult to disturb, when once he had gone to sleep, looked out upon the back. Mrs. Lovell's room was also in the front.

This Ella remembered, to her comfort, when unfastening the door that led into the garden. She had put her little camp-stool near to it, on which to be able to stand when undoing the bolt at the top. This she was doing now. O dear ! how every little noise that the bolt made frightened her. How loud the slightest noise sounded in the middle of the night ! She kept on stopping in her work, for fear her mother's quick ears were detecting a sound. At last the bolt was back, and the door was opened, but

then came such a terrible flash of fork-lightning, that for the moment it made her shrink back behind the door.

How dreadful, she thought, for the other Ella and



Then came such a terrible flash of fork-lightning.

her husband to turn out in such weather as this! What a strange night, too, for a winter's night! It is not often that such thunder and lightning come

then! At any other time it would have seemed awful to Ella to cross the yard and back garden in such weather as this, but now all fear for her brave little self seemed to be gone in thinking of the dangers to which those two poor creatures, in her summer-house, were soon to be exposed once more.

She then went out, but another flash of lightning obliged her to stand still and close her eyes for a few moments.

'O dear!' she said, 'what will they do? I think I shall ask them to stop a little longer to see if it leaves off, and I will give them the key to let themselves out when they like, and as no servants will trouble them till half-past six, they can remain very safely for two hours and a half longer.'

Ella walked on, carrying her candle, which the shade prevented from being blown out.

'Ella, I've come,' she said gently as she tapped at the summer-house door. She could not think of anything else to say to reassure her namesake. She then unlocked the door, and it would have repaid her for her night of suspense and watching, could she have known the comfort, and feeling of relief, that her presence brought to the occupants of her summer-house.

But quiet as Ella had been, well though she fancied she had managed everything, her mother had heard some sounds, and was at that moment in

her room, whither she had, at once, gone to see that all was right with her child.

But what was her consternation when she saw that Ella was not there, that her bed had not been properly slept in all night, and that her clothes had not been taken off!

It seemed all the more remarkable, as Ella was a regular mother's girl in the usual way, and told her everything. All was straightforward as a rule about Ella, but last evening her manner had seemed strange, and instead of, as was always her wont when her mother had been anywhere without her, running to welcome her on her return, and asking questions of what she had done, and relating her own doings during their short time of separation—instead of all this, Ella, last evening, had really avoided her mother, seeming only anxious to go quickly to bed.

All this Mrs. Lovell now remembered in a moment of time, and instinctively she walked to the window, moved the blind, and looked out. Why, she could not have told, for in the middle of such a night, or rather quite early on such a morning, it was the very last thing to expect that Ella would go out.

But there the child was, close by her summer-house, in that dreadful thunderstorm. What could it mean? Was the child walking in her sleep?

The next moment, clad in her dressing-gown and slippers, her mother was after her, and Ella was just asking the man and woman to take shelter a little longer, when the door of the summer-house was opened and her mother stood before her.

It was an awful moment for Ella. The distressed, almost more than angry, look that her mother fixed upon her seemed to demand an instant explanation.

The man flung himself upon his knees before the lady.

'That young lady,' he said, pointing to Ella, 'has done us—that poor woman and me—a good turn, madam, for which I pray you do not blame her;' and as the man spoke he pointed to a woman who was deathly pale. 'Do not blame the young lady,' he repeated; 'she met us yesterday, just as that poor thing was about to drop from fatigue and exhaustion, and we told her that we must push on because we—I'—he corrected himself—'must not be caught, and she saw we could not—that my wife could hardly stand. And then she offered us a refuge here, and we, from sheer inability to walk farther, gratefully accepted the shelter for a few hours, though it was full of peril, as we told her, because we must not be found or traced, or we were done for.'

So stern a look on her mother's face Ella had never seen before.

'And you did all this, Ella, without consulting,

without telling your mother,' she said. 'Was this right?'

'Oh, pardon her, madam,' the man said again, still remaining on his knees. 'I know what you are wondering: who—what we are,—whether I am a murderer or a thief, escaping for my life, my liberty. I will tell you, madam,—I am a thief. Nay, do not recoil from me. It has, I am sure, done your good daughter no harm to succour me and her,' he said gently, pointing once more to his wife,—'her, as good and true a woman, perhaps, madam, if I may say it, as your own self; and it has done me unspeakable good, for I doubt not it has saved her dear life.'

A fearful thunder-clap, which would have prevented the man from being heard now, made him silent for a few moments, and Mrs. Lovell bade him rise from his knees.

'Yes, madam,' he began again, when once more his voice could be heard, 'I am a thief, and not the *first penitent* one, for the great God knows that penitent I am indeed, so I may still have hope even beyond this wretched world. I did the deed in a moment of madness, brought about by sorrow; and for her sake and that of our only child, I would escape now from the hands of the law if I could; and this young lady met us last evening by accident, and has so far helped us in our endeavour, by kindly offering us a shelter;—not within doors,' he said quickly,—'that we

would not anyhow have accepted,—but here in a summer-house that she called her own, where rats are even welcomed by her, madam ; so for the sake of the charitable act that she has done, pray pardon it.'

'I am glad,' said Mrs. Lovell, 'that my daughter and her summer-house should have been of service to you, but that for which I blame her is acting without my knowledge, keeping all this a secret from me.'

'The young lady,' he replied, 'kept this matter a secret also for our sakes, lest we should be traced.'

'Did you say,' Ella then interrupted, 'that you had a little child ?'

'Yes, we have,' he answered, while his wife's eyes filled with tears ; 'but we left her with friends to be taken care of, whilst this good soul, my wife, came to help me to take care of myself.'

The lightning seemed to become more vivid, the roaring of the thunder louder and more frequent.

'But why did you come down here now, Ella ?' her mother then asked. 'I cannot see that this was necessary, and in such weather too.'

'To let them out, mother,' she answered. 'I had locked them in for safety, and they wanted to go away at about three o'clock.'

'You ought to have told me, child,' the lady said again, and looked up at her visitors as though to scan them.

'I would not have harmed her or hers, madam,' the man said, 'had I been a thousand times worse than I am ; her goodness and kindness of heart would always be a protection for her. And I've only been a thief since yesterday,' he went on ; 'and if you wish, madam, you shall hear my story. By birth I am a gentleman, by birth she is a lady ;' and now that her shawl was properly adjusted and her hair fastened up, this was apparent. 'I lost all, everything I had,' he went on, 'over a speculation that I thought would be the making, instead of the ruining, of me. I had for years supported an aged father, whose rent of a house, in which he had lived for forty years, was now due, and because we could not pay it, and it was in a new harsh landlord's hands, the brokers were put in, the furniture, unless the rent were paid, was to be seized in a few hours' time, and the old father would lose the home and furniture he loved.'

'Whilst thinking how he would grieve, I saw that, in the office where I was a clerk, a money-till had been left open,—the devil must have shown me that it was so,—and out of it I took £10, and carried the sum to the brokers and bade them go. I was mad at the moment,—I must have been,—and thought nothing of right or wrong, or what might come of the deed,—simply of the dear old man whose home might be saved for him. All his training for good, even, was forgotten, while I sinned thus horribly for

his sake. He, however, did not know how I had obtained the money, and I see now his beaming look of love and gratitude when I told him the rent was paid. But I wonder how he looks now,' the man said so distressfully, that there was no doubting the truth of his tale.

'After I lost all my money,' he continued, 'we lived in a room which he could not have shared with us, so it would have been the streets or the work-house for him, I knew, had I not obtained the money for the rent, but the very moment after I had paid it, I knew also how he would have preferred either to money wrongfully obtained. And an hour afterwards the money was missed, I was suspected, and a fellow-clerk and friend, who himself could not believe me guilty, ran to our little abode to give me warning that the police were on my track; and my young friend then took our child, a little one of four years old, back to his home with him. And for her sake, more than for my own, I fled at her mother's request. Her father a thief, discharged, as I was sure to be, from my office for dishonesty, a prisoner for theft, what was the prospect for my child? and if I managed to hide myself, my wife urged, later on I might find employment again, pay back the money soon, perhaps, and with strictly honest ways, which somehow, till that moment, had always been natural to me, I might almost start

a new career. So my wife said, and offered, ay, insisted on fleeing with me and helping me to conceal myself.

'Two or three times yesterday we fancied we heard pursuers, but I think we must have been mistaken; and at last, thanks be to God, your good daughter met us and insisted on our coming here. And not only,' the man said humbly and penitently, 'may God forgive my evil deed, but ere long allow me to find honest work that shall bring me in money enough to replace every farthing of that which I stole! And now, madam,' he added, 'if we may, we will move on, as we must not wait for day-light, to make a fresh start.'

'You could not go in such weather as this,' said Mrs. Lovell. 'I could not thus allow you to leave my daughter's shelter. Your wife'—('Her name is Ella,' the girl whispered, as she now went up very close to her mother)—'could not—at all events shall not—walk through such weather as this.' Ella will now take you into our house,' Mrs. Lovell then added, 'and we will offer you proper rest and shelter until to-morrow morning, if you will accept it, when we must consider what is best to be done for you.'

'*Grandfather*, next door, will be sorry for their trouble, mother, won't he?' Ella then said.

'He has many friends and much influence,' Mrs. Lovell replied, 'and might perhaps help us to hear

of some employment for Mr.—?’ ‘Howard,’ the man said. ‘Anyhow,’ Mrs. Lovell added, ‘to-morrow morning, Ella, or rather later on this morning, you shall go in and lay your new friends’ case before him.’

‘Thank you, madam,’ the man said gratefully; ‘thank you for *that* word. Oh! if instead of setting the police after a man, for his *first* offence, kind words would be spoken to him, how many a man would be stopped from ever committing a second.’

Very gratefully the poor man and his wife were conducted to the house by its gentle owner, and then shown into a comfortable room, in which to seek rest for their weary bodies and yet more weary spirits.

And Ella was very glad too, when she at last sought her bed, saying to herself as she did so, ‘*Grandfather* will be sure to make everything come right!’

The thunderstorm still raged violently without, but Ella heard no thunder-clap, saw no lightning-flash, after once she had laid her head down upon her pillow, for, released at last from anxious excitement, the child fell instantly asleep.

‘Do you not see, Ella,’ her mother had asked as she followed her daughter into her room, ‘how much better it would have been to tell me all directly I came in? Do you think I could have

refused these poor people the shelter they required, had I deemed it right to take them in ? and surely, dear Ella, yours is rather a young judgment on which to rely in such great matters, is it not? Always trust your mother, my darling. Instead of turning them adrift, I should, in all probability, have brought them in here much earlier.'

'O yes, mother,' the girl had answered, 'I am sure you would have done everything that is good and kind so much better than I could ever do it, but they were so much afraid of my telling their secret, that I could not bear to do so, even to you, dear mother; but I will never, never,' the girl had said vehemently, 'have any great secret from you again,—this I promise ;' and the calm sleep that had then come to Ella was all the calmer because this promise had been given.





CHAPTER V.

A WEARY JOURNEY.

Tis certainly a very true statement that 'bad news travels quickly.' The broken-down, now broken-hearted old father, for whom the robbery had been committed, had heard most shocking rumours an hour later, when he was visited by those who sought information respecting his son's whereabouts, who, he was also told, had absconded with a ten-pound note. He knew nothing,—how should he?—and the happiness he had felt, but an hour ago, because his home was saved, was turned into unspeakable misery. Ah! what was being cast into the streets, which he had feared—what was homelessness—what was any sorrow like unto this, the thought that his son had done a dishonest deed?

'But surely,' he said, not only to himself, but to the clerk from the office, who had come with inquiries, 'it is a mistake.' Surely his boy's innocence would be proved, however much strange appearances might be against him; and, so soon as his visitor had left him, he went round to his son's room, to make inquiries for him himself. He found it locked, and heard, from other lodgers in the house, that he had been home, but that now he and his wife and little girl had gone out and taken the key with them.

Sorrowfully the old man wended his way back to his own home. Seek his boy at once he must, he said to himself, but where? It was dark now, so of no use to start off till near daybreak next morning. He might make inquiries in the neighbourhood, but should the dreadful story be true this might only raise further suspicion.

If it had been any sum but ten pounds, the sum that had paid his rent, the father could not have even entertained the possibility of the story being true, but it did seem strange now where that ten pounds could have come from, although at the time he had not stopped to ask, feeling so glad and grateful to see it, and almost fancying even that God, in His mercy, had sent it to him.

Only in refinement of feature did poor old Howard still look the gentleman, as he wandered off from home, as he had determined to do, before

daybreak next morning. His clothes were none of the best, in consequence of the hard times of late. His trousers were tucked up because of the heavy rain that had fallen over-night, and he carried a bundle upon his back, containing clothes.



He wandered off from home before daybreak.

'Maybe,' he said, 'he might be able to settle down somewhere with them for a bit, till it was safe to return, and his furniture, some of which had been very good once upon a time, might be sold for a

few pounds to help to pay back the sum that had saved it yesterday.'

'They'll want clothes, too,' he said. 'I can't get any for her, as the door's locked, but if they've been out any part of this terrible night, they'll be soaked through, and he can have something of mine to change;' so the good father made a bundle as heavy as he could carry it.

But whither had they gone? What direction should he take in order to follow them? 'As the stars are guided in their courses, may I be directed which way to steer,' he said, looking heavenwards as he left home; and then, first passing through the village, he took a road, cross country, feeling somehow that in time he would come upon their track. He met but few people in the early morning, and no one, whom he asked, had met his dear son and daughter, and it was not safe to go on asking for fear he should raise suspicion, for every inquiry seemed to be fraught with danger. Oh, what a new sad experience was this for this poor old gentleman! No *suspicion* of any kind had ever rested upon a member of his family before.

'Is it possible even now,' he murmured, as from afar off he stopped to rest and watch the sun rise behind the trees,—'is it possible that my Jo—my honest lad that was—*could* have done it even

now? Oh,' he exclaimed almost aloud, 'poverty was hard to bear, but it was respectable, though many didn't call it so, and a chastisement, perhaps, of God Almighty's; but this is nothing but a shame,



He stopped to rest and watch the sun rise.

a disgrace, ay, a sin against the God who made us. But,' he continued, 'I warrant my poor boy has not been a thief without burning shame and sorrow seizing him after the deed was done; and,

poor lad, poor lad, he did it for me! Ah, boy,' the poor dear old man went on, 'didn't I teach you, when a little one, never to do evil that good might come, as no good ever would come of it, and those words were put in the Holy Book for us to give good heed to; but it's done now,—if it is done,' he added, still unable quite to believe the dreadful truth,—'and we must do the best we can to make it right again.'

He walked on once more, though it seemed rather a hopeless trudge, as the rain had washed all footprints away, and left therefore nothing to guide him.

Presently he reached a spot where a sign-post pointed in four directions. Maybe, he thought, as this was the shortest cut across country, they had come this way too, and then they must have taken one of those four roads. He stopped to read the posts, wondering the while whether they had found time to do the same.

'To Hopewell,' said one finger of the signpost. Surely, if they did read, they would turn in that direction, he argued. Anyhow, he felt impelled to go himself towards Hopewell.

He did *hope well*, ay, and trusted too. Faith burned within his breast as well as hope, and he believed that ere the morning passed he would find his son and daughter. Again he halted to rest, and, as the heavy bundle was laid down, he wondered

where *they* had taken rest, where, with probably but a very few, if any, coppers in their pockets, they had found shelter during that tempestuous night ; and not only were they without money and friends, but, worse



He saw an old man drop a letter into a strangely-countryed letter-box.

still, the man was without character. As those last words lingered in the father's mind, he was obliged to wipe tears from his eyes, and no wonder, for his boy was the very first of his race who had brought

anything of that sort of discredit on the poor family name.

But he must push on now, and this he did mechanically, and nothing again riveted his attention until he saw an old man drop a letter into a strangely-countrified letter-box on the roadside, and, had he but known it, that letter was for him ; but, quite unconscious of the fact, he passed on once more, and until, about an hour later, he stood still outside a pretty garden, he never paused again for one second.

An old gentleman was in that garden, accompanied by a little fair-haired girl about the age of his grandchild, and she was calling the old gentleman beside her 'Grandfather.'

No wonder that the other grandfather stood still now ! As he looked at that child, he thought of the little one of whom he had been so proud, his only son's only child, and wondered would that son, her father, ever be put in jail, and what if she ever heard the words : 'Your father stole once, your father is a thief.'

He was looking fixedly at the happy child in the garden, when she suddenly caught hold of her grandfather and said, loudly enough to be overheard by him of whom she spoke, 'Look, grandfather, at that man looking in here. He might be a thief.'

'Hush, child,' was the reply; 'what do you mean?'

'Becky used to say,' the child explained, 'that when people come and look into other people's places they might want to steal, and that she always kept "a sharp look-out" then.'

Oh, Becky, Becky! you, with your kind heart, would be sorry if you knew how, once more, the repetition of words that you have spoken has caused bitter pain!

The Doctor, noticing that the child had been overheard, and being anxious to repair the mischief she had done, walked towards the garden gate and invited the stranger to come into his garden and rest. But meanwhile Lily was sent in to her grandmother, for she had seen another stranger visit her grandfather that morning, and although she had no knowledge of his business, it was safer, he thought, for her to have no opportunity of mentioning him to any one.

'I will send for you, darling,' her grandfather called after her, 'directly I am ready for your lessons.' These had been put off all the morning, so busy had grandfather been, but he had meant, after taking a small constitutional with his little pupil, to have her for a short time to her lessons, had this further interruption not come. But it was all right that it should come; nothing ruffled

grandfather, few accidents put him out; only naughtinesses, grandmother once explained to Constance, unkindnesses, deceits, anything untrue, rude, or irreverent, seemed to have the power of causing real displeasure to the Doctor.

'May I invite you into my garden, or, better still, into my house to rest?' Dr. Rita said most graciously to the stranger. 'You look tired, and as though a rest and a little refreshment would do you good.'

'Ay, sir, I am tired,' was the reply,—'tired both in body and mind,' he added. Deep sorrow was depicted on the aged face, and somehow that expression of sorrow recalled another sorrowful face into which the dear Doctor had brought some gleams of gladness but a very short time since, and whose owner was then seated in the Doctor's study, writing an important letter. One to his father had been already written there, and posted in Hopewell's very countrified letter-box,—the one, indeed, that the father himself had seen posted.

Little did Dr. Rita guess the relationship between his two visitors, nor what joy he was about to bring to two sorrowful hearts by this proffer of rest and refreshment to a weary traveller, who had halted by his garden fence. Oh, if those are blessed who bring joy and comfort to others, in what rich abundance must blessings have been always ready to descend

upon Constance and Lilian's grandfather, whom everybody, friend and stranger alike, seemed to seek in trouble ; from whom also they so invariably carried back good comfort, help, and advice.

' You are very welcome to take rest here as long as you like,' said Dr. Rita very kindly. ' You look so tired that I hope your journey is nearly at its end.'

A very strange look came over the face of Mr. Howard the elder. ' I hope it may be,' he replied fervently ; then added, dropping his voice very low, ' Your little grandchild doubted me, and fancied I was a thief. I wonder why,' he went on, ' the child should have thought that ! Theft is a *dreadful* crime, and yet, if we knew more of the history of our fellow-sinners, we might find men even guilty of that sin to be honest men at heart. But what am I saying ? ' he continued. ' The child's words grieved me perhaps more, as I have a little grandchild of her age of my own.'

' A son's or a daughter's child ? ' asked the Doctor. The question told home. The weary, sad old father could disguise his feelings no longer, and, in vain trying to stifle tears that would force themselves into his eyes, he murmured softly, ' A son's, an only boy's.'

The Doctor was struck by his visitor's excitement, and said in a very kind voice, ' And that only boy has caused you some grief and pain ? '

The other did not answer at first, but then said quickly, 'You're not a magistrate, sir, are you ?'

'O no,' was the reply, 'nothing of the kind ; and if you would care to confide any trouble you may have to me, it shall be safe in my keeping, and I should like to try to help you through it.'

'Has he guessed,' thought the other, 'that I could disclose, if I liked, a dreadful secret concerning my boy ?'

'One moment,' said the Doctor, as his companion hesitated ; 'and perhaps I can help you to make the disclosure, as I fancy I have some slight acquaintance with your son already. Is his name Jo ?'

'Didn't I hear you say, sir,' was the reply, 'that it was safe to speak to you,—that no harm should come to my boy by so doing ?'

'I did.'

'Then his name is Jo.'

'And his surname Howard ? Am I right ?' asked Dr. Rita.

Howard, the elder, could not speak. He sat quite still, gazing fixedly at his host.

At last he exclaimed, 'But you told me secrets would be safe with you, did you not ? So I am led aright, and I shall find my boy soon !'

'He is here in this house,' said the Doctor, rising from his seat. 'Come this way, and I will take you to him.'

The father rose too, but could not go out thus. He would have fallen on his knees to pour forth his grateful thanks, but the Doctor restrained him.

'May,' he then exclaimed, 'the blessing of a grateful father rest upon your head! May the better life of a penitent son call down blessings upon you from our Father above!'

A few minutes later the father and son had met.

'You did it for me, lad,' the elder Jo Howard said to the younger. 'I know all about that; you meant kindly, but—but'—

'But I was mad,' the son replied; 'the thought of your losing your little cherished home, dad, drove me mad. But there is no excuse, I know; and had we but waited, we might have found a friend then as we have now.'

As soon as the weary, aged traveller had taken some refreshment, his son recounted his and his wife's adventures since they had left home, saying that Ella was now in the next house with the good young lady namesake who had first befriended them.

And Ella had indeed befriended young Howard and his wife. Early that morning she had gone in to see 'Grandfather,' and enlist his sorrow and sympathy for a man who had done what was very wrong, but was very sorry for his misdeed, and truly anxious to make amends.

And grandfather had advanced the £10 that had been taken, and the letter was just written in which it was to be returned, and Joseph Howard was to pay it back to the Doctor how and when he could.

'And shan't I labour, father, to do so soon!' he said, as he told this good news to his father. 'And Dr. Rita hopes to be able to recommend me to employment; and oh,' said the escaped thief, 'to repay him, not only the money he has advanced, but the great kindness he has shown towards me, shall be the aim of my poor life! And,' he went on, 'he is also using his influence, which is very great, to have the warrant against me withdrawn at once, when I—we—shall be safe.'

'And I,' said the old father reverently,—'we, rather, *all* of us (thank God), in spite of the great sin, boy, for it was all that, were led aright! I looked up and asked for guidance, and *my* Sign-post could not fail me. I hoped and trusted well, and far, far more than I hoped for has come to pass;' and such a happy smile then illumined the face of the speaker, which but a few minutes before had looked, oh! so careworn.

Little Lily came in presently with a message from grandmother, who had heard from her husband who the second visitor was.

The message was delivered in a whisper to grandfather.

'As the gentleman has a little girl my age, and I haven't any one my age to play with, granny says, would he let her come and stay with me a little time, and do our lessons together, and go for walks?'

The invitation was passed on, and very gratefully accepted for the little one, who, the evening before, had been left, with the keys of the room which she and her parents occupied, in the care of a very true and old friend of theirs.

And then grandfather took his visitors in to Dovecot, where they thanked Ella and her mother most gratefully for their kindness ; where, also, poor Mrs. Howard was very glad and much relieved to see her good old father-in-law. News of his having come had been sent in to her.

The end to this story was that Joseph Howard, the younger, was pardoned ; that, through the agency of the Doctor, he soon obtained employment ; 'and,' said his new employer, when talking to the Doctor one day, 'a more honest, steady, trustworthy servant I have never had.'

Thus another star was added to the dear Doctor's crown, another good deed was affixed to his long roll of loving-kindnesses, and these last favours that he had bestowed were bestowed in the same manner as were all his others. He himself was being gratified, he was made happy by being allowed to act as he did. He never granted a

favour and allowed the recipient of it to feel that it was a favour.

Dr. Rita was now seventy years of age, but still young, strong, and active, both in body and mind, with a spirit simple, pure, and joyous as that of a little child.

'How frightened you must have been, Ella,' Conny said to her schoolfellow a few days after her great adventure,—all the Howards, with the exception of the little girl, who had very soon been sent to Hope-well, having now returned to their homes,—'when you had hidden them in your small summer-house, and might not tell anybody!'

The girls had walked round the field-way, so as to see the exact spot where Ella first heard the footsteps.

'I was,' she answered. 'And when mother would keep on waking that night, I quite made up my mind never to have any kind of secret from her again.'

'I think,' Conny said, 'you were a splendidly brave girl, and so does grandfather; and when anybody mentions anything that he has done for the Howards, he says *that* is nothing, all their thanks are due to you.'

Ella smiled. 'I am glad grandfather thought me brave,' she said quietly. Most things that Ella Lovell did and said, somehow,—certainly all that she did for others,—were done quietly.



CHAPTER VI.

POLLY'S ADVICE.

MORE than four years have passed, so Conny Tracey is now nearly seventeen, and her little sister nearly nine years old, and the birthday, each year as it came round, for the sisters had but one between them, had been celebrated very joyfully.

The two have, as it were, changed places with regard to lessons. Lily has been to school for two years, and Conny has just left school and is reading at home with grandfather; but Lily's 'dear home lessons' as she would tell us, are not altogether given up either.

'It is very strange, grandfather,' Conny had said one day, 'that you can always find time for us, and do all your own writing as well.'

He smiled, and just said : ‘I go back all the better to my work, Conny, after helping you with yours.’

‘Grandfather,’ she soon began again, ‘are you at all anxious about Lily at school? I am very, since I left, because, when I was there, I used, every now and then, to coax her to be good, and to help her with her lessons when I might, but she told me this morning, before she went to school, that Mr. Bennett had given her a lesson to learn, which was much too long and difficult, so she did not mean to look at it, and when he called her to his desk to say it, she should just throw her book down upon the ground. I told her how naughty this would be, and begged her to let me teach it to her before she went to school, and there was a good deal of time still left, but all she did was to fetch her doll, play with it, and say, “No, thank you.”’

Grandfather looked very serious. Mr. Bennett and his wife were the proprietors of the school to which Lily went, several professors and mistresses also attending to give lessons, and it was considered a very good school indeed.

‘Lily never told me that she had a poetry-lesson to learn,’ grandfather replied, ‘and she generally shows me all her home tasks. This was not quite truthful, not quite like her, but I ought to have asked her what her lessons were.’ Dear grandfather was always so ready to take blame to himself.

It was a sore grief to both grandparents that Lilian was still so very naughty a child sometimes, in spite of all the anxious trouble that they, and Conny too, had taken to correct her of her faults ; her old grandfather, however, in spite of them all, quite doting on the child.

'Is it not a pity, grandfather,' Conny soon began again, 'that Lily has these naughty fits? I have been so frightened all the morning that she would really do what she said.'

As Conny spoke, Lily, at school, was called up to repeat her lesson, when, quite unconcernedly, she walked up to the desk and threw her book upon the ground. With all her faults, Lilian was a peculiarly truthful child, and even had she changed her mind and did not wish to be as naughty as she had planned to be, which, unfortunately, was not the case, she would not, once having said what she would do, have thought of going from her word.

'What do you mean, Miss Lilian, by this strange conduct?' the principal asked.

'It was too difficult a lesson for me,' she answered, 'so I did not try to learn it.'

'Pick up that book at once, and hand it to me,' he said quietly.

Lilian Tracey never moved.

The master was very angry now. 'How dare you behave like that?' he exclaimed. 'If you were a boy,

he went on, lifting, as he spoke, his paper-knife in the air, ‘ I should cane you.’

‘ You can now if you like, though I am a girl,’ Lilian answered defiantly, extending, as she spoke, her hand to Mr. Bennett, when certainly the quiet manner and self-satisfied look of the child were most provoking and painful to endure, but all that Mr. Bennett did was to lay his paper-knife down upon the desk, fold his arms, and once more command Lilian to obey him. All the girls assembled in the room looked up at their schoolfellow with astonishment. Never had a scholar in this long-established school been so daring before.

‘ If I were a boy, do you think I should pick it up?’ Lilian then asked demurely.

‘ Boy or girl, if you thought for one moment,’ was the wonderfully patient and kind reply, ‘ I do not think you would stand there and defy, not only one set over you as instructor, but one also old enough to be your grandfather.’

‘ Grandfather!’ This one word recalled the child’s better feelings. What would he, *her* kind grandfather, say, if he could see her now? She knew how her conduct would grieve him, and with that thought the naughty passion began to pass away, and Lilian stooped and obeyed.

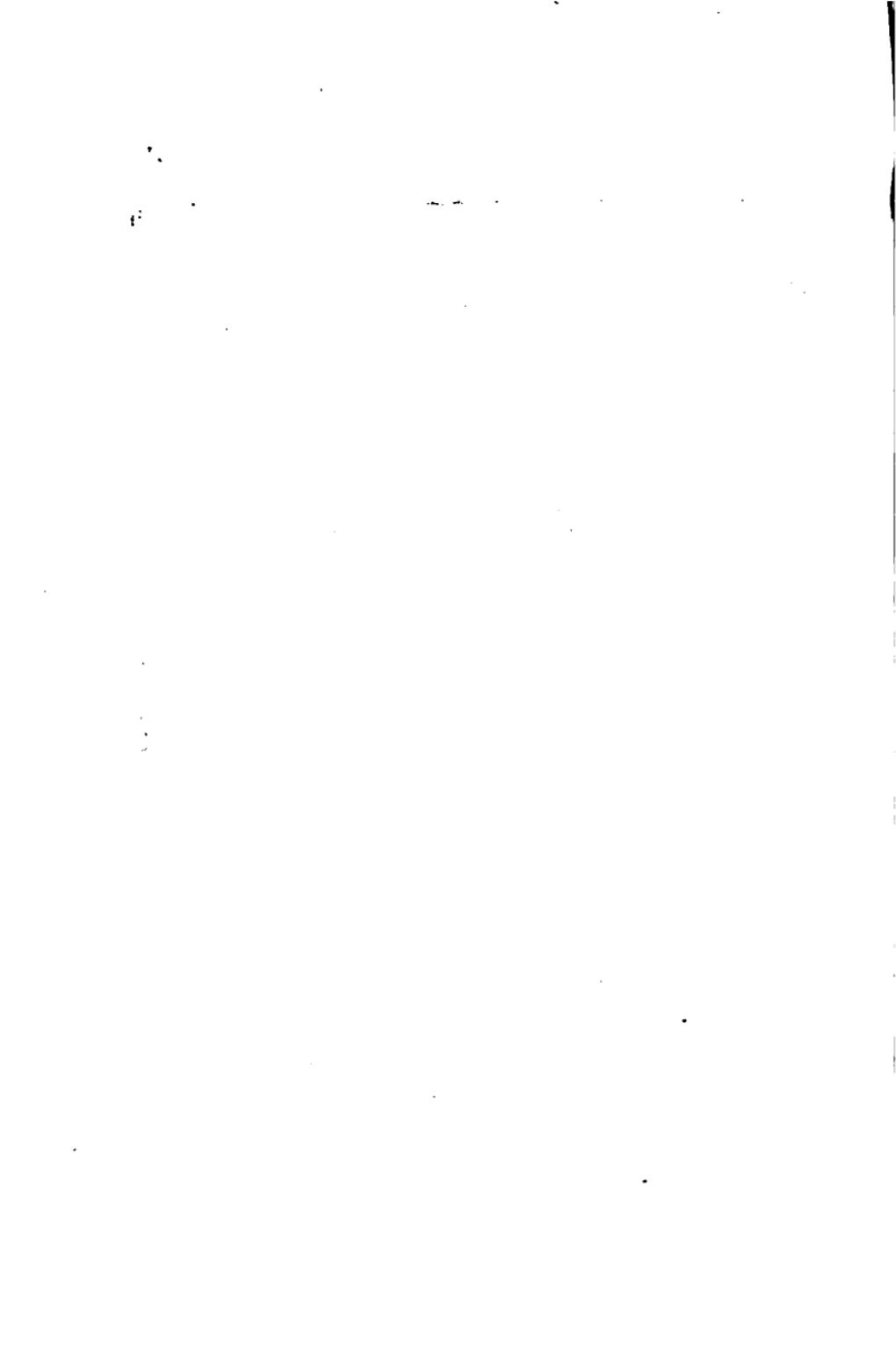
Later on her punishment was chosen.

She was, after school was all over, to remain, not



' You can now if you like.'

G



only to learn the poetry lesson brought that morning to school unlearnt, and which she had thought so long, but another page added on to it, and she knew also that she would not be allowed to go until it



'It is for your good, child, not our own.'

was properly learnt and said, and that when the maid fetched her, after school-time, she would either be kept or be sent home again to return later for her.

So as soon as Lilian might begin her task, she learnt her lesson with all her might, and an hour after she should have started for home she stood in front of her desk, with her hands folded together, saying her lesson very creditably, but with an angry scowl upon her face as though she were being persecuted, instead of persecuting those who were striving to teach her.

So soon as the lesson was said, Mrs. Bennett spoke very kindly to Lilian, and asked why, when she could learn so easily, she had been so naughty, and had given so much trouble over the lesson, but all that Lilian still did was to pout.

'It is for your good, child, not our own,' the lady said, 'that we wish you to learn all that you can; and grown-up people, especially teachers, feel very much rudeness and disrespect shown to them by children. You should tell Mr. Bennett before you go home, that you are sorry for your insulting conduct towards him this morning, for it was most rude—do you not think so?—for a little girl, when told to say her lesson, to throw the book down at her master's feet.'

Lilian was fetched for the second time, and knew that her grandparents and Conny would be wondering all this time why she was so late.

But she still made no reply.

'Well, child,' Mrs. Bennett soon began again,

'we want no unreal expressions of sorrow, so until you do feel this for your conduct I will not ask you to express it. You can go home now, and I hope that by the time you return to school to-morrow morning you will be sorry for your naughtiness, and ready to say that you are.'

Kind Mrs. Bennett then kissed Lilian, who still only looked aggrieved.

Very eagerly Conny ran to welcome her little sister when at last she arrived home, and a very saddened hour poor 'little mother' had spent with her grandparents, while Lily was kept in, because of the naughty resolve that had been told to her that morning.

'You didn't really do what you said you would, Lily dear, did you?' Conny asked as she went up-stairs with her sister to take off her hat and jacket. 'I have been so afraid that you did something of the sort.'

Conny was still 'little mother' to Lily.

'Of course I did,' was the child's reply. 'I couldn't tell a story after I'd said I should, and I didn't want to, either.'

'So as not to tell untruths,' Conny explained, 'we have to be careful what we say we will do. But if we resolve to be naughty it is better to change our minds afterwards and not be so.'

'And tell a story?'

'When we said we would do the thing, we, of course, meant to do it, but when we come to a better mind it is better to leave it undone, or otherwise we commit two faults. Oh, Lily,' Conny went on, 'I am so sorry you were so naughty in school, and mother would have been dreadfully sorry, you know, if she had lived. Mother would be sorry,' Conny repeated, hoping with these words to make her little sister feel sorrow too.

Lily's tea had waited some time for her to-day, so she quickly went down to it, and although Conny now dined late with her grandparents, she always had a cup with her sister, for which she had also waited. Grandfather and granny had not been half kissed this evening. Oh, being naughty must have made so much difference to Lilian's happiness, and yet she would not half try to be good. She sat on grandfather's knee as usual this evening, but longed to be off it, and was quite glad when dinner was ready and she could run up-stairs to her own room where only Polly was.

'Oh, Polly,' she said, going up to the bird, 'I am so, so miserable! I wonder, if you had been a girl instead of a bird, whether you would have been good like Conny or naughty like me.'

Polly had had nearly five more years to learn to speak, so had grown most clever at imitating.

'Naughty like me,' the bird answered.

Lilian could not help smiling through her tears.

'Oh, would you, Polly?' she said; 'you wouldn't be a bit happy if you were;' and the child cried again.

Polly, all attention, seemed to be trying to cry too.

'You would be sorry, Polly, I expect,' Lilian then said. Conny knew quite well that when she went to dinner, her sister would go up and have a talk with her parrot, which would do her more good than anything else.

'Sorry,' Polly repeated, and then went on: 'Mother would be sorry.' The bird had been in the room while Conny had said these words, and had practised them when Lily was at tea.

'Oh, Polly,' Lily answered, 'it's unkind of *you* to say that, because mother gave you to me, and I don't want to make her sorry.'

'Mother would be sorry,' the bird repeated.

Lilian half seemed to be coming to a better self. She quite looked upon Polly as a reasonable, thinking creature, to whom she could go for advice; and many a difficulty did she carry in consultation to her bird.

'If you had done it, Polly,' Lily then asked, 'would you say you're sorry to-morrow? It isn't a nice thing at all to have to say.'

Polly did not answer.

'Would you say you're sorry?' Lily asked again.

'Say you're sorry, say you're sorry,' the bird echoed.
'Mother would be sorry.'

'But she'd be glad, Polly, if I were good again,'
Lily said; 'and so would you be, and Conny and
dear granny and grandad.'



'Say you're sorry,' the bird echoed.

'Dear granny,' Polly whispered. She never said 'old fogey' now; that naughtiness was quite forgotten, and both grandparents, who often had a talk with Polly, really seemed to be loved by the bird.

A few minutes later, Lily and Polly's stand were

fetched down-stairs, for Polly always went to dessert with her little mistress, and no one but Conny guessed, as the child went into the dining-room, how much the bird had to do with the better mood so visible in Lilian, nor with the sorrow that she expressed for her conduct before she went to bed.

Strange as it may appear, nothing seemed to do the little girl so much good, when a naughty mood was upon her, as a quiet talk with the bird that her mother had given her eight months before she died.

And when Lilian went to school next day she carried with her, as fruits of her penitence, lessons beautifully learnt, which she had risen early to learn, and the apologies which she really believed Polly had advised her to offer ; and her good conduct, and diligence, throughout the day went farther, than any words could have done, to show that she was really sorry for her yesterday's wrong-doing, and her kind, but just master, forgave her. Grandfather had also asked Lily that morning to make Mr. Bennett an apology.

‘ It’s a dreadful thing to do,’ she had answered.

‘ Not at all,’ he replied. ‘ I will tell you what the poet Pope has said about this, and perhaps that will help you to be brave. He said that “a man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.” ’



CHAPTER VII.

A WAYWARD 'LILY.'

CRANDFATHER is always planning something or other to make us happy,' Conny said, very rightly, a few days later. In anticipation of Lilian's summer holidays another plan had been made, 'and such a kind one for Lily,' Conny added. So that she should really enjoy them, a little companion of her own age was to be invited to Hopewell to spend them with her.

'You, dear Conny,' grandfather had said, 'are a dearer, kinder, sweeter companion for your little sister—and God bless you for it—than any other I could find, but the child, I think, should have thorough romps in her holidays, like she used to have with little Eva Howard nearly five years ago. Dear me, how the time passes!' he had continued. 'And I think,' he

had also said, 'that Lily is much too quiet a child, in her games, for her age, and I want these holidays to put plenty of life and spirit into her.'

Lily was delighted at the prospect, and the invitation was sent, on the following day, to their Uncle Bernard for his little daughter Katie, who was a few months older than Lily, and, like herself, had an elder sister, but no sister of her own age, to come and spend a few weeks with her at Hopewell and some at the seaside, whither the Doctor meant, during the holidays, to try to take his family party; and although the Bernards lived a long way off, Katie's father was very glad to accept the kind invitation for his little girl, and she very soon arrived.

She had so many miles to travel, that the servant who brought her had to remain at Hopewell all night and start on her return journey early next morning.

As the little cousins had not met for a long while, they were very glad to see one another.

'How good you are, grandfather,' Conny said when Katie had gone, very tired, to bed on the evening of her arrival,—'how very, very good to us!' and she could not help hoping, as she had hoped so often since she and her little sister came to live here, that Lily would try to be a better child, so as to show gratitude to the grandparents who were so very kind to them, for she was still dreadfully wilful, often

causing, as Conny knew, great sorrow to them as well as to herself.

'We are glad, darling,' the dear Doctor answered, 'to do everything that we can to make either of you happy, and it was a great comfort to us to find that you and Ella suited one another so well, as we feared at first that you were very dull and sad here.'

'I felt lonely at first, grandfather,' Constance replied, 'because I missed mother so much; but mustn't *she* be happy,' the girl went on, speaking very eagerly, 'if she knows how happy we are here, and what a dear good grandfather and grandmother her father and mother are to us?'

Grandfather looked very pleased. It was a pretty little speech of Conny's, and loving gratitude is very acceptable to those who do all in their power to give children pleasure.

It was most lovely weather for the pretty garden, where the two little cousins and grandfather spent a good deal of their time. And now, at the end of July, it was looking almost, but not quite, its best. In August, grandfather said, he expected every annual to be out and the flowers to be in perfection.

He had taught Lily the names of very many of the roses. She knew so well the lovely yellow Gloire de Dijon, the darker, sweet-scented Maréchal Niel, the exquisite crimson Duke of Edinburgh, the soft pink rose, as she called that named 'Emotion,' and heaps

of others, for Hopewell's garden was noted for its roses. Then lilies were there too in beautiful variety, huge beds of double poppies, every kind of geranium and pansy, and no end of every other kind of flower, Lily explained to Kitty, when she met her at the station.

'These were all the children we had, Conny,' grandfather said one day, pointing to the flowers, 'before you and Lily came; so we loved them very dearly.'

Conny and Lily each had a large bed of their own in the garden, in which they planted and tended their favourite flowers, and when Kitty came Conny had asked for her to have, during her stay, the little piece of ground that little Eva Howard had been given for her own, while she was there, which Conny remembered, though it was so long ago, but Lily had forgotten all about her visit; and now that little girl had gone to America with her father and mother, where he was doing very well indeed.

It was one of Lilian's greatest treats to help grandfather in the garden, and she would often say to him, 'I am useful to you, grandfather, am I not?' and he would always answer 'Yes, darling, very.'

'Quick, little gardeners, I want you at once,' grandfather called out to Lily and her little visitor, about a week after the latter had arrived. 'I've a great deal of work for my little gardeners to do

to-day, in the way of watering; and George is, always, to fill the watering-pots as soon as they are empty, and to tell me afterwards how many times he has filled them.'

They both ran quickly in answer to the summons.

Without noticing what she did, it so happened that Kitty picked up the largest watering-pot, with



Lily walked away in anger.

which she immediately set to work to water a piece of ground very near to where she stood, and on which grew a beautiful lily, always called Lily's namesake.

This was a terrible grievance to Lily, and instead of saying quietly (although this would not have been polite to a little guest), 'I want to water here;

do you mind going somewhere else, please?' Lily walked away in anger.

'Aren't you going to begin soon, Lily?' Kitty asked, quite innocent of having given any offence.

'No, thank you,' the other replied; 'I don't want to begin.'

'Oh, do come,' Kitty went on, still not looking up or imagining, for one moment, that Lily was angry.

'I'd rather not,' she repeated. 'Grandfather likes me to help him when you're not here; but I suppose now you can do it better.'

This was a very unreasonable speech, and very rude and unkind, and astonished Kitty so much that she put her watering-pot down at once and ran to ask Lily what was the matter with her. The two girls were alone in the garden.

'I wanted to water that lily,' the flower's naughty little namesake said.

'But there are heaps of other beds that want watering,' Kitty replied. 'Shall I carry your watering-pot to a nice one for you, or would you like to finish there now and I'll go somewhere else?'

Lily only sulked, which made Kitty look unhappy.

'I wouldn't have come,' the little visitor then said, 'if I'd thought you would not like to have me better than this.'

'I do want to have you,' was the reply.

'Then I wouldn't have watered at all,' the other went on, 'if I'd thought you wanted to do it all yourself.'

Kitty had a very happy disposition, and did not understand making troubles out of nothing.

'I didn't,' Lily said.

'I'm sure I'm very sorry I chose that bed,' Kitty soon began again. 'I wouldn't have for anything, if I had known; but I expect,' she continued shrewdly, 'that whatever part I had chosen you would have liked best; but that lily and fern just there are certainly lovely!'

'Of course they are! That is the very best lily in the whole garden; and grandfather always calls it my namesake.'

'What a good thing it is,' Kitty then reasoned, 'that flower-lilies can't get cross as well as children! I should have thought that you'd like somebody else to water your namesake for a change, better than always doing it yourself. But I'm very sorry my face is so like yours, as "grandfather" says it is, if you look so cross, and I'm very sorry too I've made you so; so please be kind again now; and if you'll only tell me where you want me to begin to water, I'll go and begin. But if we waste all our time "grandfather" won't be pleased, when he comes to see what we've done.'

Lilian looked quite ashamed of herself now, and when George came to see why the two young ladies had not been ready sooner for the other watering-pots he had filled, he found them now both quite ready to go hard to work in emptying them.

Lily was not often naughty again to Kitty while she stayed with her, but very often poor Conny noticed 'a something' not quite pretty in her little sister's conduct which grieved her very much. The cousins had become very good friends indeed.

The day before Kitty went home again, they were talking about Lily's parrot, which had been taken to the seaside with them.

'I never in all my life,' Kitty said, 'knew a parrot like yours. It does say so much, and seems quite to understand things.'

'I believe it understands everything,' Lily replied; 'and now I'm very careful what I say before it, for fear it should learn anything naughty.'

It was a good thing that there was some check upon Lilian's naughtiness.

Kitty laughed.

'You must come and stay with me some holidays soon,' she then said, 'You may bring Polly with you, you know.'

'Thank you,' Lily replied; 'but I don't think I could leave Conny for anything in the world, and

I shouldn't like to leave grandfather and grandmother either.'

In spite of all the naughtiness, Lily was a very affectionate child.

'But I've left my sister for you,' Kitty said.

'Yes, so you have; but she has a father and mother and brother, as well as you, and before we had grandfather and grandmother here, though I can't remember it well at all now, we had only ourselves, and Conny promised to be my "little mother," and don't you see she is it, and I don't expect she'd like me to go away from her.'

'But quite real children go away from their quite real mothers,' Kitty argued, 'so I think you might come; and, Lily dear,' she went on, speaking softly, 'as she's such a good "little mother," mustn't she be very sorry when *you're* cross to her?'

'I don't get cross when there's nothing to make me,' was the silly excuse Lily made.

'We haven't such a beautiful garden as you have,' Kitty then said, 'or so many flowers; but we have acres of grass and land, and splendid hayricks, and ever so many horses, and cows, and sheep, and lambs, and poultry, and pigeons, and the pigeon-house is like a tower, built quite near the stables; and Becky has left her last situation, you know, because the work was too hard, and she and Fluffy are coming to live with us.'

'I should like to see Becky and Fluffy again,' Lily answered; 'but I don't want to come and leave Conny, thank you; but if I did want to go away anywhere, I should like to come where you



The stables at Kitty's home.

are very much, and to see all the horses and cows and sheep. Kitty,' she then went on, quite changing her tone of voice, 'I've very often let you water my lily since then, haven't I, and not minded it at all?'

'Yes,' was the answer; 'and you haven't been cross to anybody for a long time.'

Grandfather was right. A companion of her own age, for a short time, had been very good for the spoilt child; and though dear Conny did not know it, though she tried to do everything that was good and right towards her little sister, sometimes she still spoilt her very much.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE SICK CHILD'S DREAM.

ONE evening, late in the following winter, grandfather, very lonely and anxious, sat all alone in his study, wondering when either of 'his children' would be down there with him again, and if there were any hope for little Lily.

'We were too old, perhaps,' he was saying sadly to himself, 'to undertake the entire care of them. It is such terribly anxious work when they are ill, and we miss them too much when they are not about.'

He was sitting in 'the' chair, as Lily used to call his especial arm-chair, when, running into the room and finding it empty, while grandfather stood at his bookcase referring to some book or other, she

would say, as she threw herself down upon it, ‘Oh, may I just sit in “the” chair for a moment, because it is so comfortable, and I do feel so clever when I sit in it?’

Grandfather’s face was now hidden in his hand,



Grandfather sat all alone in his study.

and he was going over again in his mind the words that the doctor had just said to him.

‘Speak the truth, doctor,’ he had said first; ‘tell us all; but they are life, and joy, and health, and comfort to us, so give us all the hope you can;’ and

the anxious eyes fixed upon the face of the medical man had pleaded for assurance almost more even than had the voice.

'Your eldest grandchild is now out of danger,' was the welcome reply. 'There have been fewer headaches by far lately, and the delirium has ceased for a long time. It was certainly most wise to have all that thick hair cut off at once. I have now given permission for her to sit up in her room for a very short time to-morrow, which time I hope we shall be able to lengthen a little every day.'

Constance and Lilian Tracey were ill with typhus fever. Conny took the fever first, and the grandparents were contemplating sending the younger sister away somewhere at once, for fear she too should take it, and her little strength not prove sufficient to grapple with the disease; but Lily was already sickening for the fever, and it was too late to make any such arrangements.

The best of nurses had been at once procured for Conny, as granny was too feeble now to do herself all that she would have wished in the way of nursing.

When first taken ill, Conny had asked most anxiously about her little sister, and had said several times that she was very glad she was ill instead of her.

But the next day Lily looked weaker than usual,

put her hand to her head, and then shivering attacks came on, and when the doctor came again there was no doubt what it all meant ; the pain was spreading from her head to the rest of her body, and Lily's form of the fever soon proved to be a worse one than her sister's, although, from the very first, she suffered a great deal less with her head.

Lily grew worse and worse. Her throat was so dry, she had a very bad cough too, and at times there was so much difficulty in breathing, that it was feared the poor child would choke.

She begged to be in Conny's room, so the patients were nursed together, although it was thought at first that it might aggravate Conny's illness to see her little sister ill. But when she was conscious she was glad to know that she was there, and longed to get better soon, so as to be able to help to nurse her.

'And what about the little one?' grandfather had asked the doctor that evening, after he had spoken so favourably of Constance ; 'what about my little Lilian ?'

'She will require the greatest care for a long while,' was the answer. 'There is hope, but there is great danger too.'

And then, when the doctor had left, grandfather had buried his face in his hands to ask for strength to be patient, for courage to be hopeful ; and the

strength had come, and hope too, when, ten minutes later, he presented himself in the sickroom ; but no one but himself could realize what anguish had accompanied the thought that he might lose his little 'Lily of the valley of his old age,' as he sometimes called that child so very dear to him.

A fortnight went by, and Conny was so far convalescent that she was allowed to be dressed for a few hours. She sat in an arm-chair by a table not far from the fire, but nearer to Lily's bed, reading a book. As soon as her little sister awoke, she beckoned her to come quite near to her.

'Do you think, Conny dear, please,' she then whispered, 'that you are well enough to take me on to your lap while they make my bed, as I should like to come so much ?'

'May I, nurse ?' Conny asked very eagerly.

Nurse put a high stool for Conny's feet, then wrapped the little invalid in her dressing-gown, and listed her on to her sister's lap.

They looked a great contrast, these two sisters, Conny with her very dark hair, and Lily with hers so fair.

'A sweet pair,' nurse muttered, as she watched them ; 'but she's hardly strong enough for that sort of thing just yet.'

But Constance felt so herself, and as the elder sister clasped the younger one in her arms, and

rested her cheek on the little head, which lay upon her shoulder, she resolved to try to do this now every day for Lily, and was, oh ! so thankful to nurse ‘the child’ once again ; for being ill and feeble and unable to stand at all made her seem so much younger than she was, and it seemed to carry Conny back to the time when she had been her little baby-sister.

‘Do you think I shall die, Conny?’ was the first question Lily asked. ‘I don’t want to,’ she went on, ‘till I’ve been a better girl to you and grandad and granny. I dreamt just before I woke up, from my last sleep, that an angel came to see me, and he said it had surprised him so much to hear me such a naughty girl, when I had such a good little “sister-mother,” and such kind grandparents, and he hoped I would live to turn over a new leaf.’

A tear trickled down Lily’s face as she spoke.

‘Did he really say “little sister-mother”?’ Conny asked, evidently pleased.

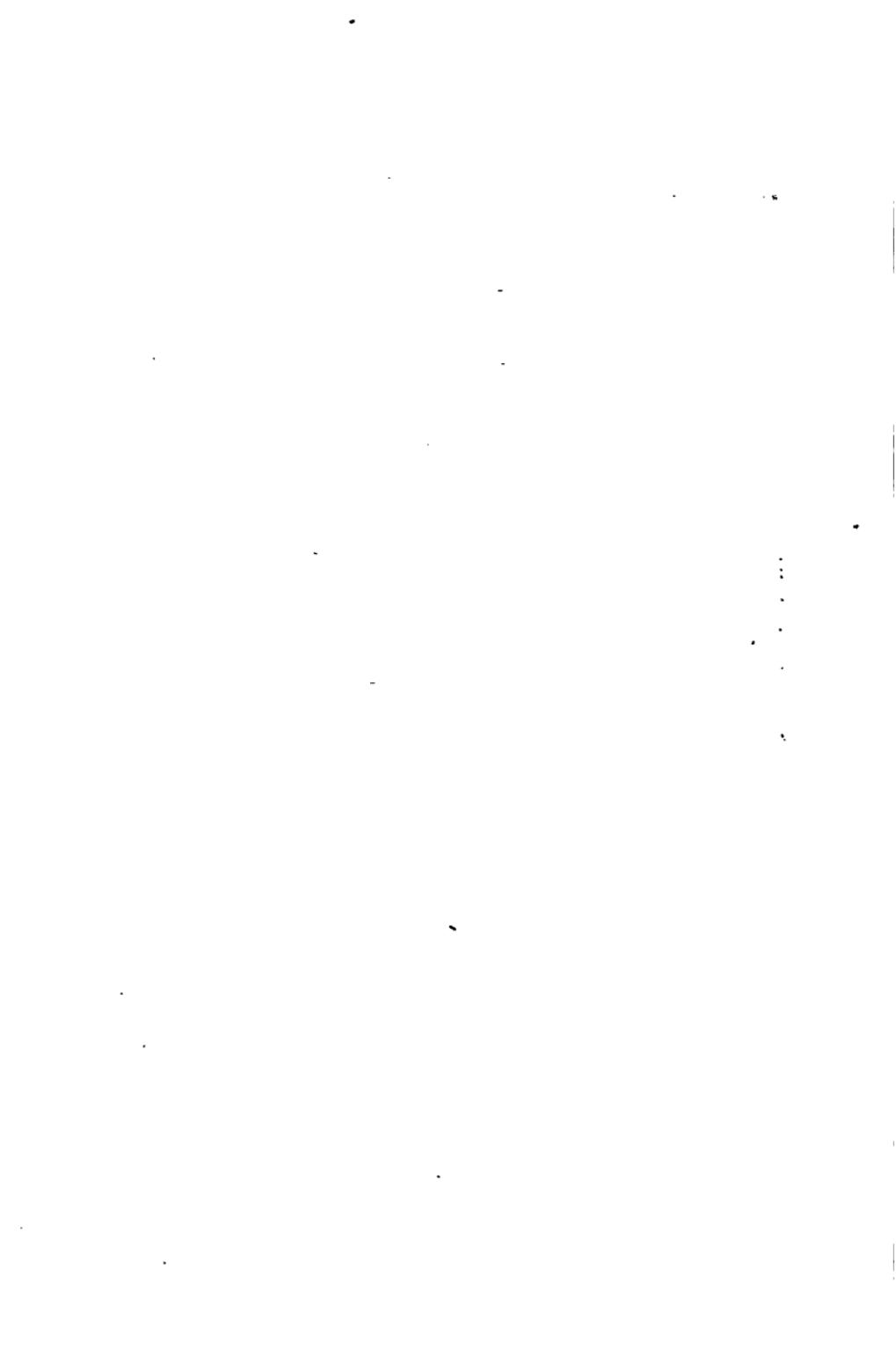
‘Yes, I heard him,’ was the child’s answer, ‘and he seemed to be such a kind angel, though he said that to me ; and shall I tell you what I said to him ?’ Lily then asked.

‘Yes, do,’ was the reply.

‘Well, I said that if he would ask God to make me better, I would try to be good when I was well again, and even before, I told him, as I would try not to feel



'Did he really say "little sister-mother"?



cross because I was so ill, and could never now go down to see grandad.'

Lilian loved her visits to grandfather's study almost better than any other treat, and the beautiful stories that he there told her while she sat upon his knee.

'But *do* you think I shall die soon, Conny?' Lily asked again.

The elder sister could not answer for a little while.

'No, darling,' she then said; 'I do so hope and think not, and I am very glad you asked the angel to ask God to make you well again. It was beautiful to think of doing that. I always pray so fervently for you to be made better, when I say my prayers, and now you are really a little better, you will be able to say your prayers again yourself, won't you?'

'Yes, Conny,' Lilian answered; 'and I think I should like to say them now on your lap, but I can't kneel up, you know, I can't even sit up a bit;' and just moving her position a very little, so as to place her hands together, was as great an exertion as the sick child could possibly make, and, leaning her head on 'little mother's' shoulder, she then said her evening prayers.

If Conny had sometimes spoilt her little sister, she had certainly also done her a great deal of good.

'I wonder,' she said to herself, as Lily was now lifted off her lap and put into bed, while she leaned over to kiss her once again, before returning to her



While she dozed, during the day, her doll lay beside her.

own bed, for she was now quite tired enough, 'whether real mothers, like ours was, love their children more than I love Lily. I don't think they could, somehow. Oh, I hope she won't die!' she then went

on thinking. ‘But no,’ the next thought was, and she looked so hopeful as it came, ‘I don’t think she can now, as she has asked that angel to pray for her to live.’

Later on in the evening, when grandfather came up to sit with his grand-daughters for a short time, Conny told him the story of Lily’s dream, and he seemed, she thought, to like it quite as much as she had.

The next morning Lily was so far better that, very soon after she awoke, she asked for grandfather’s last present to her before she was ill, and while she dozed during the day, her doll lay beside her.

‘She does look ill,’ Conny said, as soon as she was dressed, and took a seat close beside the bed, thinking that her sister would like to see her there when she next awoke; ‘but still she must be a good deal better, as she’s asked for her doll, because she hasn’t cared for anything till to-day, all the time that she has been ill. Don’t you think, nurse,’ she went on, looking up, ‘that it really seems like being a little better?’

‘It not only seems, miss, but is,’ was the reply. ‘I was more pleased than I can say, when Miss Lily asked for that doll, and said where it could be found, for it looks to me like taking a very great step towards getting herself again.’

This was very comforting, and whenever during the next few weeks of still very serious illness that followed, Lily asked to have her doll, Conny felt very glad ; but they certainly were most anxious weeks, and often the grandparents and Conny asked themselves, during that time of watching and waiting, ‘ Will our dear little one ever be restored to us in health again ? ’ when the remembrance of the angel’s visit to Lily, and the child’s request to the angel, brought Conny hope, and the sick child herself was never so happy or so patient as when her ‘ little sister-mother ’ nurse kept watch beside her ; and although it would have been far better for Conny now to be much less in the sickroom, and out of it to be gaining strength herself, she often said, both to herself and others, that she could not have a greater pleasure than waiting upon her little sister.

One day she was made very happy. Not only was she asked to arrange the pillows so that Lily and her doll, who was now her constant companion, could sit quite upright, and Lily had not been able to do this before, but the child then asked for a pencil and piece of paper to write a letter.

‘ I am thankful ! oh, thank God, darling,’ Conny exclaimed, as with folded hands she stood in front of her sister, watching her write her letter, ‘ that you are so much better ! Why, you sit up quite easily ! ’

'You have put our pillows so comfortably that we can't help being comfortable,' Lily answered, too much occupied with her pencil, either to look up at Conny or round at her doll as she spoke; 'and you have cut my pencil so beautifully. But don't look yet. I am writing a letter to grandfather,



'I am writing a letter to grandfather.'

and you mustn't see it till it's written. But I hope he'll excuse the writing, as my hand is rather shaky still.'

'I expect he will be so glad to have a letter from you, Lily, that he will excuse anything,' was Conny's reply; 'but I am very anxious to see this letter myself.'

It was soon ready, and contained a formal invitation for grandfather, granny, and Polly to tea that afternoon in the 'sick-ward,' running thus:—

'Miss Lilian Tracey "At Home" this afternoon, Thursday. Tea at four o'clock in the Sick-ward.

'The pleasure of Dr. and Mrs. Rita and Miss Polly Tracey are requested. An answer will oblige.'

The letter was delivered, and the answer very speedily returned. To have seen the dear grandfather's joy when he opened the envelope, and recognised his little girl's handwriting once more, would have done Conny's heart good. He knew so well that for Lily to have made these little plans, and have written that letter, she must be wonderfully better.

Preparing for the 'At Home' was also a pleasant diversion for Conny, who sent for flowers from the garden wherewith to decorate the room and tables, and then ordered, as granny had said she might, anything that she liked for the tea. Polly had plenty to say when sh arrived, and, as the bird had been kept very much away from her little mistress, during her illness, Lily was delighted to have her with her once more.

But fearing that Lily would be over-tired, granny insisted on the reception being a very short one, and grandfather was impolite enough, Conny remarked, to get up in the middle and lay his little hostess down upon her pillow.

'I hope,' Conny said, as she showed her visitors out, 'that we shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you here again.'

'Or rather,' answered grandfather quickly, 'that we shall soon have the pleasure of welcoming you to an "At Home" in'—

'My little study,' Lily finished for him. 'O yes, grandfather darling!' she went on; 'I do so long to sit in *the* chair again and feel clever.'

'Thank God!' grandfather echoed outside the door, as fervently as Conny had spoken the words at Lily's bedside, a few hours previously. 'Thank God for that!'

This was the first day that the child had shown any real signs of gaining strength; therefore they were so very welcome.

But he knew how very careful she must still be, and how necessary it would be for every one to look very carefully after the excitable child for some time to come.

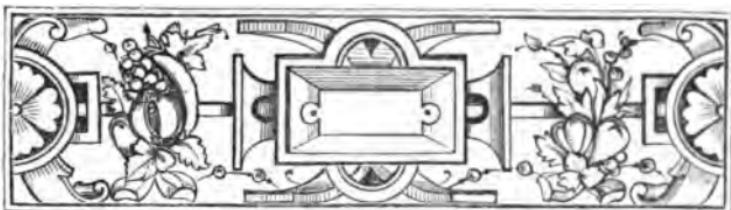
'I am sure, dear,' grandmother said to her husband at dinner that evening, 'that Conny ought not to be so many hours in that room now. I

believe half of her pale looks may be traced to her almost always remaining there, but certainly her great happiness seems to consist in nursing and watching over Lily.'

'She *is* a good girl,' replied grandfather,—'a good girl in every way; but I agree with what you say about the pale looks, and we must see what can be done. We thought,' he went on, speaking half to himself and half to his wife, 'that at our ages it was a great undertaking to have the children, and when Lily was so dangerously ill, again I questioned had we acted rightly, but I believe fully that we did, and God alone knows the unspeakable comfort that they have been to us, and how we bless Him for sending, and now sparing, them to us.'

Granny looked very happy as she answered 'Yes,' and when she went to bed that night a third 'Thank God!' was most gratefully said that Lilian's life was spared.





CHAPTER IX.

GRANDFATHER'S STORY.

ALTHOUGH several weeks had now passed since Lily had so far recovered from the fever that she had been up and about again, she gained but very little strength; indeed, grandfather thought, as she paid him more and more frequent visits to his study, that she became thinner every day. Change of air had been ordered for the convalescents, but unfortunately their grandmother was now so ill that she could not be moved, so neither of the grandparents could leave home.

Kitty's father, hearing of all this, wrote at once to invite his nieces to come and spend some weeks, or months, if they could be spared so long, at his farm. When the invitation arrived, grandfather,

as he read his letter, knew that it would be good for both the girls for him to accept it for them. Far rather would he have taken them away somewhere himself, but his wife's illness made this impossible ; and then, too, he also felt that it would not be right to deprive them of the companionship, for a little while, of their cousins.

'I wonder, darling,' grandfather said, the day on which the note of invitation arrived, when Lilian sat upon his knee, and he thought how thin and pale she was, 'how granny and I managed to get on before our chicks came to us. I feel now as though I could not bear you out of my sight for any length of time.'

'I wouldn't be out of it long either,' the child replied.

'But if it were good for you, darling, to go away somewhere for a time to get strong again, I should have to send you.'

'And wouldn't you come too ?' she asked.

'Granny could not go away until she was a good deal better,' was the reply ; and Dr. Rita sighed as though he feared that his wife's illness were a serious one.

'And Conny ?'

'I want Conny and you to go away together for a little while on a visit, which is sure to be pleasant, to your Uncle and Aunt Bernard, and Kitty and your

other cousins. Your uncle has kindly written to invite you, and I expect the fresh air of the North, and the good milk of the farm, will bring ever so many roses into my little girl's cheeks.'

'A lily ought to be white, grandfather, you know,' Lilian said, smiling; but then, looking very grave again, she asked whether Conny wished to go.

'She has not yet told me,' was the answer, 'but I only gave her the letter to read about an hour ago.'

'Grandfather dear,' Lily then said, as though she wished to change a disagreeable subject, 'don't you think you could tell me a story now, as you haven't told me one for a long time? I should like one of the *Tanglewood Tales* ones, I think, if you can remember any more of them, because you gave that book to mother when she was a little girl, didn't you?'

'Yes, Lily, and she was very fond of the book, and especially of one story in it called "The Pygmies." If I have never told it to you (and I do not think I have), I will tell you that one now.'

'You have never told it to me,' Lily said, leaning her head down upon grandfather's shoulder, and placing one of her thin little hands into his, 'so please begin at once. Oh, what shall I do if I have to go away and never hear any of your beautiful stories?'

'I shall have to tell you all the more, to make up for it, when you return.'

'Very, very many years ago,' grandfather then began, 'there were supposed to live, in the middle of Africa, a very odd and tiny race of people called Pygmies. Their houses were in size like squirrels' cages, and their cities, and everything they contained, were small in proportion; their cathedral, for instance, in which hundreds of them worshipped, being about the size of an ordinary bureau, and they could walk under their stalks of wheat as easily as we walk under our oak trees. But they had one *great* friend, and great, Lily, in more senses than one, for he was a giant. His name was Antæus, and he could not only carry ever so many of these little people at once seated in the palm of his hand, but there was more strength in his little finger than in millions of their little bodies.'

'They called Antæus a "man-mountain," and when they saw him approaching them, they would cry out, "Halloa, brother Antæus, how are you?" and he would answer the little shrill squeak by saying, "Pretty well, brother Pygmies, thank you!"'

'But what a good thing it was for the Pygmies that Antæus was so kind to them,' Lily said.

'Yes, and it was also a very good thing for him that they liked him so much, as he felt very lonely sometimes, with his head amongst the clouds, with no other being near anything like as big as himself;

and if there had been another to match him, Antæus would, no doubt, had he come to see him, have thought that there was not room for them both, and have tried to kill his visitor. His little friends quite pitied him for being so big, and called him "Poor creature" when they talked of him together.

'Sometimes, on Pygmy holidays, Antæus would lie down upon the ground for the little people to amuse themselves by climbing over him. Little Pygmy children would play at hide-and-seek in his hair, see who could first get round the circle of his one eye, or walk along the bridge of his nose, and then they would leap down on to his upper lip.

'But these little people had some enemies, about whom I must tell you. They were cranes, and these birds would come and fight battles with the little people, and, picking them up in their beaks, would swallow them alive.'

'Oh, poor little things!' Lily said; 'why did Antæus let them do that?'

'Well, when he saw the cranes getting the better of his little friends, he protected them by flourishing his walking-stick aloft, which was a pine-tree, when the cranes all ran away, and the Pygmies marched home in triumph, thinking that they had gained a great victory.'

'Anyhow, the Pygmies were a brave, gallant little people, who never wished to make enemies, and

whose forefathers had lived, for a good many generations, on good terms with their friend, the giant.

‘But one day the mighty Antæus was lolling at full length amongst his little friends, his head being in one part of their kingdom, and his feet extending over the boundaries of another part, when they climbed on to his shoulder to see all around them, as we should take a view from a high hill.

‘They soon saw something in the distance, which they, at first, mistook for a mountain, but then it moved, and they saw that another giant was approaching, although he was not nearly as big as Antæus. The little people, terribly alarmed, tried hard to awaken their friend. “Halloa, brother Antæus!” they shouted, “get up this minute and take your pine-tree walking-stick in your hand. Here comes another giant to have a tussle with you.”

‘But Antæus said he was sleepy, and would not move. Meanwhile, the stranger came nearer and nearer, and soon the Pygmies could see that his shoulders were broader than those of Antæus, that he wore a golden helmet, a breast-plate, a sword, a lion’s skin over his back, and carried in his right hand a club which looked even heavier than the pine-tree of Antæus.

‘Again the Pygmies called to their friend: “Get up,” they said. “The strange giant’s club is bigger than yours, and we think he is stronger.”

'Antæus, not liking to hear any one called stronger than himself, now got up and strode a mile or two to meet the other giant, brandishing, as he went, his walking-stick in the air.

"Who are you?" Antæus thundered.

'That giant then told him that he was Hercules, and that he had come here because it was the most direct way to the Garden of the Hesperides, whither he was going to get three golden apples for King Eurystheus.

'Antæus was very angry, and said that Hercules should not pass, and that he was fifty times stronger than was he. The wonderful part about Antæus was, that whenever he touched the earth, with any part of his body, he became ten times stronger than he was before.

'Antæus was very rude to Hercules, who really only wanted quietly to pass on his way, and, calling him a puny dwarf, said he would make a slave of him. A battle then began, Antæus hitting Hercules with his pine-tree, and Hercules hitting Antæus with his club. Antæus fell, but only to rise up ten times stronger than he was before. Hercules gave him another blow with his club, which hurt him very much, but after falling even his bellowing became ten times louder than it had been, and alarmed dreadfully the poor little Pygmies.

'He made another rush at Hercules, who warded

off his blow with his club, and then broke his pine-tree to pieces.

'But Hercules now began to see that he could never conquer Antæus, if he kept on knocking him down, as he always rose up all the stronger for his fall, so he made up his mind to try another plan, and proposed to wrestle with him. Antæus, who was very proud of his wrestling, as he was also of his great size and strength, called Hercules a villain, and said he would fling him where he could never pick himself up again, and advanced once more.

'Hercules, who was so strong that he had once held up the sky, caught the giant in both his hands, and, lifting him in the air, kept him up there sprawling. He did this because he had learnt the secret "that these earth-born creatures are only difficult to conquer on their own ground, but may easily be managed if we can contrive to lift them into a loftier and purer region."

Grandfather paused a moment, and Lily said, 'I think I see what your moral is, grandfather. I must rise higher to conquer my temper, pray to be better, bring supernatural gifts to my aid: I will try.'

Lily was very old-fashioned sometimes, especially now since she had been ill, and had had time to think a good deal over some of the many other stories that grandfather had told her.

'But poor Antæus,' Lily went on, 'how did he fare up in the air like that? I am afraid I can guess.'

'As soon as he was off the earth he began to lose the vigour and great strength he had gained by touching it, and unless the giant touched his mother earth once in five minutes, not only all his strength, but even his life, would leave him.'

'And he died?' Lily asked.

'Yes.'

'Oh, what a pity it was that he was so proud, and so rude to the stranger Hercules!' she then said.

'Yes, for had he been civil to him, and allowed him quietly to go on his way, he would most probably not have interfered with him at all.'

'And the poor little Pygmies,' Lily said, almost crying. 'How sorry they must have been to see their big brother dead!'

'They were, and set up a most terrible wail when they saw their "enormous brother treated in this terrible manner;" but Hercules, perhaps mistaking the noise for the frightened chirping of some little birds, took no notice of them, and lay down to go to sleep.

'The little people then assembled themselves together, and the best orator amongst them made a speech to the rest, in which he said that their brother and "faithful ally" must be revenged, and he was willing either to meet Hercules in single

combat, or to fight a battle with them against him. As all wanted to take part in the battle, every fighting man amongst them went up to the sleeping Hercules, some carrying their tiny spades, with which to dig out his eyes, and others hay, wherewith to plug his mouth and nostrils so as to stop his breathing.

‘But Hercules was breathing so heavily that he blew all the Pygmies away, and so gave them no chance of injuring him in that way.

‘They next decided to collect a number of sticks and dry weeds to heap round Hercules, and then to burn him by setting them alight, and if he stirred the archers were to shoot him.

‘But as soon as Hercules felt his hair burning, he jumped up, asking very sleepily, no doubt, what was the matter.

‘His little enemies called him a villain, and declared war against him for slaying their great brother Antæus.

‘Astonished at the queer sound of the little voices, Hercules, as soon as he had put out the burning of his hair, looked round to see whence the sound proceeded, and at last caught sight of the Pygmies.

Picking up the nearest one, he set him on his hand, asking who he might be. Fortunately, it was the little orator himself, so he answered very readily : ‘I am your enemy ; you have slain our great brother

Antæus, and we are determined to put you to death, and I challenge you to instant battle on equal grounds.'

'Hercules laughed so much at this speech that it was hard work for the Pygmy to prevent himself from falling off his hand.

'Hercules then said that he had seen great wonders, but never anything to equal that wonder which now sat on the palm of his hand.

"Your body, my little friend," he said to the Pygmy, "is about the size of an ordinary man's finger. Pray, how big may your soul be?"

"As big as your own," was the Pygmy's reply.

Hercules admired the little man's courage so much, that "he could not help acknowledging such a brotherhood with him as one hero feels for another."

"My good little people," he said, making a low bow to the grand nation, "not for all the world would I do intentional injury to such brave fellows as you. Your hearts seem to me so exceeding great that, upon my honour, I marvel how your small bodies can contain them. I sue for peace, and as a condition of it will take five strides and be out of your kingdom at the sixth. Good-bye. I shall pick my steps carefully for fear of treading upon some fifty of you without knowing it."

Hercules laughed, but for once in his life acknowledged himself vanquished.'

'By large hearts in little bodies,' Lilian said, 'I see, grandfather, what you mean now,' the engaging child went on; for though Lily could be, and was, so very naughty sometimes, she was a very loveable child when she chose; 'with big hearts and souls, the smallest people can conquer the hugest enemies.'

'Quite right, my pet,' was the answer. 'And therefore, as my Lilian is headlong and headstrong, but heartstrong withal, I expect her to make the heart conquer.'

'It *shall*, grandfather,' she said bravely and determinately. 'I won't forget your story, and I'll try to be as brave as the bravest Pygmy. I don't wonder that you liked those *Tanglewood Tales* so much that you gave them to mother when she was a little girl, because they have such beautiful meanings. Antæus would not have been killed, too, if he had not been so proud, quarrelsome, and disagreeable to Hercules. He might even have become a real friend of his.'

And a very grateful kiss rewarded grandfather for the time he had just spent, not the trouble he had taken, to amuse Lily, for that was never a trouble to him, and the fact of being able to give pleasure to old or young, man or woman, child or any four-footed little friend even, was always reward enough for grandfather for any sacrifice or exertion on his part.

'Now,' he said, rising from his seat, 'we will go and see how granny is feeling ;' and though the chapter he had particularly wished to read that afternoon remained unread, and the marker was returned to mark the same page that it had marked when grandfather closed the book yesterday afternoon, he was quite satisfied.

Conny was with her grandmother when the two went into the room ; and for some reason or other, while Lily stayed there that evening, she said to herself, 'I think Conny is rather like grandfather.'





CHAPTER X.

SEPARATED.

AN entrance had been made to connect the gardens of Hopewell and Dovecot, so that Conny and Lily could go and visit Ella Lovell, and she could come to see them, without going into the road at all ; and in the summer, if either of the sisters had anything they wished quickly to tell to Ella, they often ran through the gardens, without even putting on their hats, and, before looking for her in the house, knocked at her summer-house, where she was still often to be found.

Two days after Lily had heard the story of 'The Pygmies,' she was looking out of one of the back windows with a letter in her hand, and seeing Ella in her own garden, she dashed down the stairs and

through both gardens to catch her, as she had something she wanted to tell her at once, and enlist her sympathy. She caught her up the moment after she had returned to her summer-house, which was now most securely thatched, and, during the summer months, made into a regular study, and



'But Conny is my "little mother" too, you know.'

fitted up with a beautiful writing-table and book-case.

'Just fancy, Ella,' Lily exclaimed, so excitedly that she spoke as much with her fingers as with her tongue,—'just fancy, Conny and I have been invited to go and stay with our cousins in the North, and Conny will only stay three days, because granny

is ill, and might want her, so this letter has come to say that she must go for the three days, and I am to stop on for a long time alone when she leaves there. Isn't it horrid? I don't want to go a bit.'

'I think it is very good of Conny not to leave your grandmother while she is so ill,' Ella answered. 'And just like Conny too, because she is always thinking of other people. I expect, you know, Lily,' Ella went on, 'that you won't think it at all horrid, either, when you get there, but will like it very much. Sisters do not always go away on visits together.'

'But,' Lily replied, 'Conny is my "little mother" too, you know, as well as my sister, and I haven't ever been away from Conny all my life to sleep for one night, and Becky's never left Fluffy yet, so why need I leave Conny?'

'Because you must have a change,' Ella replied, 'and would make everybody unhappy if you did not go, Conny especially, as she wants you to get stronger so much.'

'But I shall have to leave everybody, even you, too, Ella,' the spoilt child went on; 'and you're almost like another sister to Conny and me, aren't you? We think so, at all events.'

'So do I,' said Ella; 'but perhaps you'll see me sooner than you think, if you go to your uncle's, as mother and I are thinking of going away for a

change ourselves soon, and she told me, the other day, that she thought she should go to the next village to where your uncle lives, because she has friends there, and thinks it such a healthy part, so perhaps you will have *this* sister nearer to you there than you would have thought possible,' Ella continued, smiling.

'That would be beautiful for me,' Lily answered; 'but I would rather you stayed here, because Conny would be dull without us both,' she continued; 'and grandfather says you are getting on so well with your sciences together, that he quite enjoys your lessons himself. I wonder when I shall be old enough to learn these sciences. What is the one you have just learnt?'

'Just been learning,' Ella corrected. 'There is a great deal for us to learn yet before we can call it "learnt." Our last science was philology, and that teaches us what language is and the history of words. We are to study logic next, I think; and grandfather does explain everything so beautifully to us!'

'I think he does to everybody,' Lily said.

The child had improved very much since she was ill, and made that promise to the angel, and glad as she would have been to have Ella near to her, she would really now rather leave her behind with Conny

Ella herself had had a great disappointment. She finished the story she was writing five years

ago ; it was offered for publication, rejected, and now lay hidden away in a drawer.

'That's how it should be,' grandfather had said very quietly. 'Take my advice, my child : put your pen and paper away, for at least ten years, and meanwhile bring out your books. It was a little presumptuous, wasn't it, at your age, to wish to write books for others to read to their profit, so don't be disheartened, but teach yourself first, Ella, and then try to edify other people.'

And though what grandfather said seemed very unkind to poor Ella, yet she knew he meant it all most kindly, and, though she shed many a tear over the MS. she had taken so long to write, she put it away very resignedly, and, bringing out her books, was glad to have all the time to devote to them that before she had employed in writing ; and when she had looked sad sometimes, and grandfather had repeated to her, 'Be content to read and teach yourself for the present, Ella, and then try again,' she had really felt quite contented to do so.

When Lily left Ella that afternoon, she went at once in search of Conny, to tell her that as everybody seemed to think she ought to stay at Kitty's alone, she would do so, but she hoped she would not have to stay very long away from her 'little mother.' 'And don't you think, Conny, you could stay a little longer than three days ?' the child pleaded.

But Conny had made up her mind, and, much as she longed to stay with Lily all the time that she was away, she would not leave her grandmother for longer than she had arranged, the three days in which she hoped to see Lily happily at home with Kitty and her parents ; and although it would have been well for Conny to have a much longer change now, than the three days she allowed herself, she was such an unspeakable comfort to her sick grandmother, that her grandfather could not bring himself to say that she must not return when she wished to do so.

Their uncle and cousins met the sisters at the station, but as their aunt was out visiting a sick friend when they arrived, they did not see her until they had removed their walking things, when she returned.

'I am taller than Lily now, mother,' Kitty said, as the lady embraced the two children, telling them to be very fond of, and kind to, one another. Conny held a small carpet-bag in her hand, which contained presents of books from grandfather.

He never forgot anybody, and an almost countless number of children had he made glad, during his long lifetime, by the many happily selected books which he had given to them.

'I wish you could stay longer with us, Conny,' Mary, Kitty's elder sister, said, who was three years older than her cousin Conny ; but Conny's only

answer was that she was very sorry she could not do so.

'Your house would please granny,' Constance Tracey then said. 'Everything is so prettily arranged, and you seem to have vases of flowers everywhere. Grandmother is so fond of flowers



'I am taller than Lily now, mother.'

too, and Lily and I always arrange ours, and are responsible for the water being kept fresh.'

Conny could give but a poor account of her grandmother's health, but she had a great many things of interest to relate about her grandfather, of whom she never wearied talking, or, it seemed, others of listening.

And though Conny did not know it, and in this ignorance perhaps consisted half the charm of her sweet, gentle character, she, like grandfather, was very much of a favourite also, and even her boy-cousin Ted, who was sixteen years of age, and now at home for his vacation, said to his mother early the next morning what a jolly girl Conny was, and what a pity it was that she could not stop longer.

The next few days were most happily spent, and everybody seemed to be very happy ; Becky was at the farm too now, and so glad to have her two young ladies in the same house with her again, although she said they were so grown that she wouldn't have known them but for Miss Conny's likeness to her father and Miss Lily's to her mother, but Fluffy knew them both again, somehow, and had welcomed them most boisterously when they came. Fluffy loved the farm dearly, and had soon become very friendly with the horses and other dogs, and seemed in such good condition, Conny thought.

The night before her sister had to return to Hopewell in the early morning, Lily looked very sad indeed ; 'Quite miserable,' Ted expressed it, 'as though we were going to ill-treat her as soon as your back is turned, Conny ;' but Conny could not smile, and it was perhaps more of a trial to her to leave her sister, who was always still her 'little sister,' than it was for the 'little sister' to be left.

'It won't do me a bit of good, Conny,' Lily said entreatingly, 'to stay here without you, because I shan't be a bit happy; I know I shan't, and I'm a little ill too, you know,—I must be, as I've had to come away for change of air; so can't you think about it again, and leave granny a little longer?'

Conny had thought about it ever since she had been here, and the sight of Becky and Fluffy had recalled the morning to her mind, on which the inventory of their house in London was taken, and the sisters had had their breakfast in bed together, and Lily had said, 'You must be to me like Becky is to Fluffy,' and had asked Conny to promise never to be taken from her, and she had said, 'Never if she could help it;' and since that time, as Lily had said, they had never been separated for one night; but now it seemed to the elder sister that the time had come when she could not help it, when her duty to the grandparents who, for nearly six years, had been so very good to them, called her from Lily's side, and, having weighed all again, she did not waver in her resolution, even when Lily begged her so hard to do so, but answered gently, though quite firmly, 'I would love to stay, darling, but granny is very ill and likes to have me to sit with her, and poor grandfather is more anxious, I believe, and sad about her, than he ever lets

us see he is, and he would be so lonely without us both.'

'But it is so long in the train, Conny, that I shall be so far away from you,' the child went on.

Conny had thought of this too, but it could not be helped, and she then promised to write long letters very often to her little sister, and post them in 'that funny box by the roadside,' and, asking her to try and be very good and obedient to her aunt and uncle, and very well-behaved and good-natured to her cousins, she wished Lily good-night with a sad heart.

After she had started next morning,—and it was at her own request that Lily did not see her off by the train,—the child threw herself down on a sofa in Kitty's schoolroom, and, putting her hand under her head, on the soft sofa cushion, she would speak to nobody and take notice of nothing but three dear little kittens playing in the room, all of which she took up to nurse. Her aunt came to talk to Lily, but she would not answer her, nor would she either talk to Kitty, who settled herself at the table to do some drawing.

Kitty's governess, Miss Basil, and Mary had gone, with their father, to the station to see Conny off, and when later they returned Lily had not moved. It would have made Conny a good deal sadder than she was even, had she known this, for it

was very rude behaviour on Lilian's part, and at nearly ten years old she should have tried to have a little more self-control, however sad she might be. When Miss Basil and Mary came in they spoke to Lily, but still she paid no heed to what was said, when Mary sat down upon the sofa beside her



Lily paid no heed to what was said.

and induced one of the kittens to crawl up her back for a game. The other two seemed very contented to lie on Lily's lap, only turning round every now and then to watch their little sister's games, and at last the kittens succeeded in doing what nobody else had been able to do, namely, in making Lily sit up and smile at their play. Soon after

this Ted came in, and insisted on Kitty's giving up her drawing, and she, poor, sad little Lily, for whom everybody was really very sorry, knowing how much she loved Conny, going out into the garden to have a game of tennis which he would condescend to play with them, if Mary would come too, which she did, and Lily was somewhat, but that first morning only very little, comforted.

'I expect,' she said once in the middle of the game, 'that those little kittens will teach my Polly to mew;' for Lily was not altogether alone here among strangers, as Conny had arranged for her to bring her bird with her, and Polly was now in the schoolroom with the kittens. Lily was dearly fond of all animals, and she did not remember the time when she had been without her parrot. Becky was pleased to see the bird again, but it was to be hoped that she would teach her to say nothing more that was naughty.

And by degrees Lily 'cheered up,' and began thoroughly to enjoy her visit.

'It's rather nice, I should think,' she said one morning, when her cousin Mary came in tired from riding, and threw herself down upon a sofa, and asked Lily to take her boots off for her, 'to be an elder cousin or sister, as they get so much waiting upon; but,' she continued, speaking very thoughtfully, 'sometimes they haven't the best of

it, and have to *do* the waiting upon.' *Conny* did the waiting. Mary seemed to like a good deal of waiting upon, but she had asked Kitty to fill a flower vase with water, and then to put into it a beautiful bunch of roses that had just been brought as a present for her. Lily was looking



'S metimes they haven't the best of it.'

pale but very pretty. The cousins were not quite so much alike now, and as Lily's hair hung over the white frock in which her grandmother so often dressed her in summer, and she knelt upon the ground to do what Mary asked, her cousin thought how very delicate, though pretty, she looked to-day.

But the very bracing air of the country sur-

rounding the farm, and the nursery milk from a prize cow, three times a day, soon began to bring some roses into Lilian Tracey's cheeks, and she and Kitty were the best of friends. Miss Basil was kindly teaching Lily to draw as well as Kitty, and the child showed a decided aptitude and taste for drawing. But as Kitty had learnt much longer than her cousin, she was naturally now far more clever with her pencil, and often very kind in helping Lily.

'I do so wish Conny were here,' Lily said to herself one day when they were all, Miss Basil, Mary, Kitty, even Ted, and herself, spending a most enjoyable afternoon sitting on the grass out of doors, under the shadow of an overhanging tree; Miss Basil and Mary working, she and Kitty drawing, and Ted reading aloud to them.

Ted loved to read out loud. He was a clever boy, but unfortunately conceited, which spoilt everything, and sometimes his elder sister would say very kindly, but very pointedly, to him, 'I wish, Ted, you were not quite so fond of hearing yourself talk.'

However, to-day he had pitched upon a very interesting book, and, as he read well, all were edified.

But unfortunately he was so dreadfully particular about never being interrupted, that when Kitty and

Lily wanted to say anything to one another about their drawing, they were quite afraid to do so, and had to 'wait their opportunity,' as Kitty had before expressed it to Lily, 'when he took breath.' But Lilian thought that she had never heard anybody read before who wanted 'to take breath so seldom.'

'And all this pleasure, and two picnics that we've been to on the mountains,' Lily was thinking once instead of listening to the book, 'Conny has given up to nurse granny! I wonder whether I shall ever be as good as she is!'

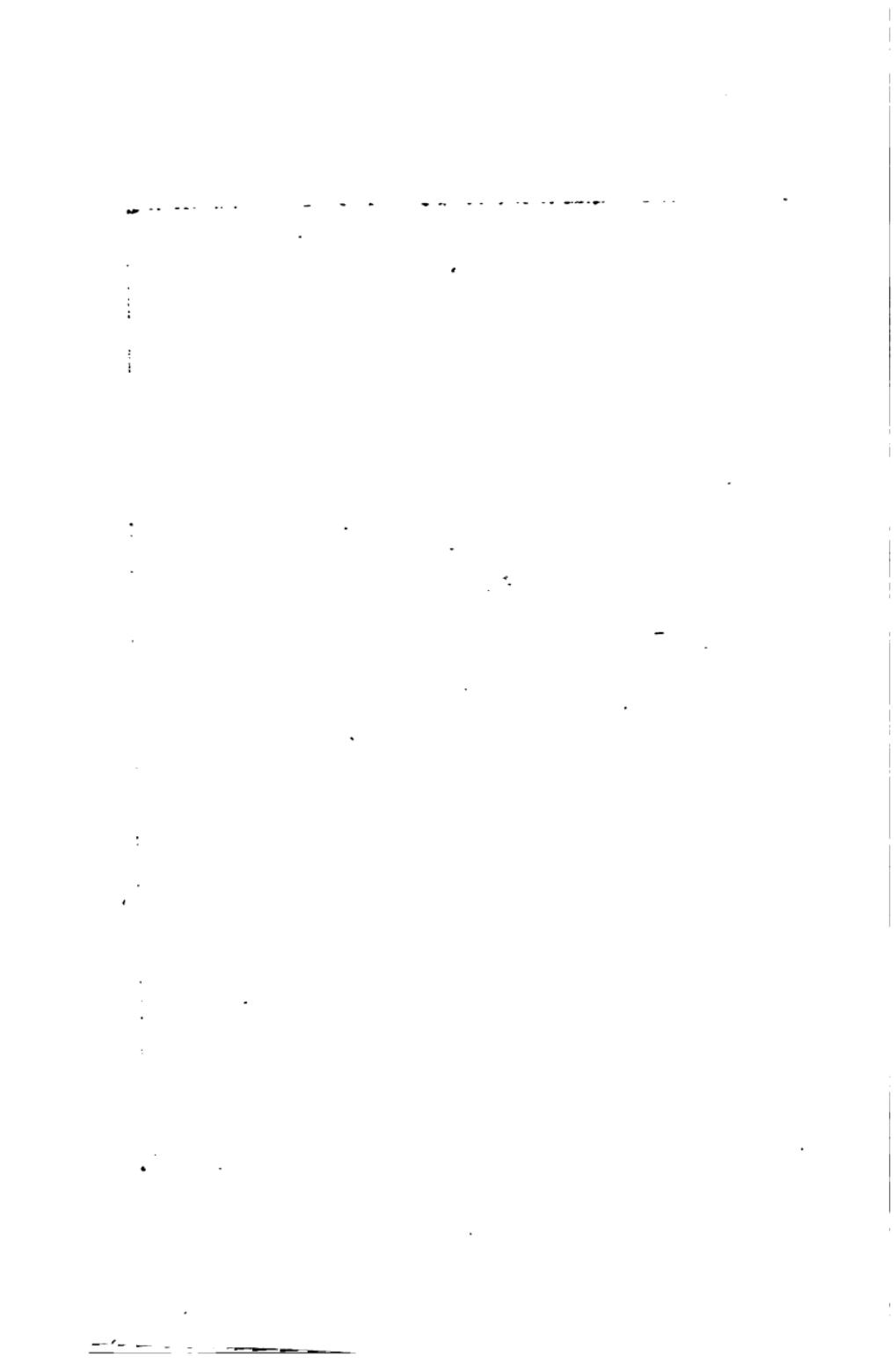
But Lily dared not let her thoughts wander away from the book too long, for Ted had a way, when he was reading aloud to her and Kitty, of asking them questions every now and then about what he was reading, and it would look very rude, and so stupid, if she had to let him see that she had not been paying proper attention to the story, of which she had heard enough to know that it ought to interest her very much.

Lily certainly loved her 'little mother' very, very dearly, and often, when all the others were enjoying themselves greatly, it was not all happiness for her. There was a longing for Hopewell, a yearning for Conny and her love, and an anxious wondering how the dear grandparents were getting on.



' And all this pleasure Conny has given up to nurse granny ! '

L



Conny had not written very lately, which was a sore trial to Lily, but the reason for this was grandmother being much worse, and Conny shrinking from sending such bad news ; not knowing either how to write without telling her sister how dear granny was. The truth would distress Lily dreadfully, and in all probability make her long still more to be at home, and the doctor strongly advised grandfather to leave the child at the farm a little longer.





CHAPTER XI.

THE LOOKING-GLASS.

LILY had been so good at Dunkdale that everybody thought her a very well-behaved little girl, and her aunt was very fond of her, so when a servant, one early morning, came, with a very serious face, to tell her that her aunt wished to speak to her in the morning-room, she could not think what had happened.

'You look just as if I had done something wrong, Becky, but I haven't, have I?' the child asked.

'I hope not, Miss Lily,' was the answer, 'but I expect you know that best;' and the girl still wore that look, Lily thought, which people only wear when somebody has done something for which he or she has to be scolded.

'I am quite sure I haven't,' Lily said, as off she ran to her aunt.

When she went into the room, that lady was standing opposite to a flower-vase on a table, to the back of which was a broken looking-glass, and



'Somebody else must have done it.'

her face was even more serious than Becky's had been.

'You arranged these flowers for me last evening, Lily, did you not,' Mrs. Bernard asked, 'and gave them fresh water?'

'Yes, aunt,' was the reply; and as Lily spoke she put her hands behind her and looked first at the

vase, then at the broken glass, and then again up at her aunt.

'And why, Lily dear,' was the next question, 'did you not come and tell me at once that you had had an accident and broken the glass?'

'Because I never had it,' the child said fearlessly. 'I am quite sure I hadn't, and that when I came out of the room last night it was not broken at all. Somebody else must have done it.'

'Nobody went into the room last evening, my child, after you left it. I have made every inquiry, before I sent for you, to ascertain this fact, and directly Becky went into the room this morning, she found the glass in this condition, and came at once to fetch me to see the accident.'

'It *is* a pity!' Lily said, grieving, at that moment, more for the broken glass than that suspicion of having broken it should have fallen upon her; 'it *is* a pity!' she repeated; 'but really I'm quite sure I didn't break it, as I must have known when I did it;' and the face of the little girl, thus speaking, had a most truthful look.

'Are you quite sure, Lily,' her aunt asked again, 'that you did not hit the glass in any way? We are all liable to have accidents, you know, and I shall not be at all angry because you have done this, only I could not bear to think that you were persisting in saying what was untrue.'

'You really think I did it, then?' Lily said in a dreadfully offended tone of voice. 'You don't believe that I did not do it, when I say I didn't. I'd better go, I should think, and ask Kitty if she knows anything about it, as she might, perhaps.'

'I have asked Kitty,' was the answer, 'and you were the last, everybody says, to go into that room yesterday.'

'I know Kitty never does touch that vase,' Lily went on, 'as we've agreed for me always to do that one myself; but I do wish we could just guess, even, how the glass got broken,' she continued, examining it. 'I suppose the vase was standing up all right when Becky first saw it, or it might have fallen down and broken the glass itself.'

'The vase was as you now see it, Lily; nobody has touched it at all.'

'How funny!' the child replied; 'but it is a pity the glass is broken; but as I did not do it, and don't know anything about it, may I go now, please, aunt, as I was just giving Polly some sop?'

'Yes, Lily, you can go,' her aunt said; 'but I cannot quite think that you are speaking the whole truth now, sorry as I am to doubt you, so come back to me, at any time, if you have anything at all to tell me about this breakage, and I will forgive it all.'

'I'm quite sure I'm speaking the truth,' Lily

answered. ‘It’s a dreadful thing not to do so, I know, and that’s why I’m so particular always to speak it.’

And as Lily walked out of the room, she felt very much tempted to lose her temper and be very rude to her aunt for ‘daring,’ as she said to herself, to doubt her, and accuse her wrongfully; but she thought of the little Pygmies and how they conquered Hercules, and how Hercules conquered Antæus, and how grandfather wished her to try to conquer her giant-enemy temper, so she just asked God to give her strength not to be angry now, and she sealed her little lips until she again joined her parrot, to whom she then poured forth an account of her grievances.

‘I wish I had never touched the vase at all,’ Lily said, ‘and I did make it look so beautiful, too, yesterday. Oh, what a bother it all is! What a dreadful bother!’

‘What a bother!’ Polly echoed; ‘hang it!’

Ted had taught Lilian’s bird to ‘hang’ things. Lily smiled.

‘I do believe, Polly dear,’ she said, ‘that if I were ever so miserable, *you’d* make me laugh. Come and have a walk now;’ and, unloosening her beautiful bird, Lily let it follow her about the room, which it did almost like a dog.

‘We would be an awfully jolly pair if people would only let us alone,’ Lily said.

'Jolly pair,' Polly echoed ; 'let us alone.'

Ted had quite won Lily's heart by saying that he had never seen a parrot who talked better than, or learnt as quickly as, did hers.

'Oh, thank you, Ted,' she had answered ; 'but you won't teach it any worse words than "hang it," and "I'm blowed," please, will you?' And Ted had promised not to do so.

'I don't want to go for a row on the river at all this afternoon,' Lily then said to Polly, 'now I'm not believed. It seems such a dreadful thing that I don't care for anything, but to talk to you, Polly dear, and yet I suppose I must go, or aunt will think I am sulking. Oh,' she then exclaimed, and both Lily and the bird stood quite still when she made this exclamation, 'how I wish Conny hadn't had to go and nurse granny! *She* would have believed me, I know.'

Polly nodded assent, and also made a noise which Lily always took for acquiescence in what she had just been saying.

At that moment Kitty came into the room to feed, and give a bath to, her canary, a dear little tame bird, that perched on her shoulder, and took seed out of her mouth, and now lived in the same room with Polly.

'Who do you think could have broken that glass, Kitty?' Lily asked at once.

'I can't think,' was the answer. 'I thought you must have done it by accident.'

'If I had, of course I should have gone at once to tell aunt all about it. I don't do things like that.'

'I thought not,' Kitty replied; 'but mother cannot see how anybody else could have done it.'

'Then she still thinks I'm telling a falsehood,' Lily exclaimed indignantly, bursting into tears as she spoke; 'oh, that is unkind of her! I wish I had never, never touched the vase, for I know I never broke the glass at all.'

'I believe you quite,' Kitty answered, 'and so does Becky; you couldn't say that you hadn't done it like that if you had, but it is funny,' she went on; 'and do you know, the other day my doll's tea-service was broken, when I went to get it out of the cupboard, and I am sure it wasn't broken when I put it away, and I thought nobody knew where it was but myself.'

'I expect you were as sure,' Lily replied, 'as I am now about the glass. And was it ever found out who did it?'

'No, but Becky said in the morning, when I asked her, that she thought she had heard a little noise in the night; but of course she did not, as everybody said they were asleep, and no thieves would come to rattle and break a doll's tea-service, and then go away.'

'I wonder if thieves could have come last night,' Lily then said, quite pleased with the new idea that had struck her. 'Perhaps they did, and then thought they heard somebody, and ran away and broke the glass by mistake. But oh, no!' she continued; 'they couldn't have done it, as the street door would have been open, or one of the windows, and I suppose they weren't, and somebody must have heard them.'

'Yes,' said Kitty.

'But don't you think,' Lily then asked, another thought striking her, 'that somebody must have heard me too, or heard whoever did it?'

'I should have thought so,' Kitty said; 'and when you were doing the flowers, I was only in the dining-room, with the door open, so that was very near.'

'It's very funny,' Lily said, 'and so was the tea-service. Did you tell aunt about that?'

'No, I forgot to tell her.'

The two girls then went to breakfast, and from that meal out into the garden. It was holidays for everybody now, but Kitty and Lily still took their drawing lessons, which Miss Basil, who was remaining with Kitty during these holidays, was kind enough to give them.

In the afternoon they went for the promised row up the river, that flowed near their house,—the row to which Lily had so very much looked forward,

but for which, she had told Polly that morning, she did not now care to go. Ted and Mary rowed, and she sat facing them, between Miss Basil and Kitty.

There was so high a wind that afternoon at the corners, or rather at the bends, of the pretty river, that Miss Basil's hair blew down, and their hats had to be well secured. The scenery all around was very beautiful, and Miss Basil, who was short-sighted, and therefore wore glasses, pointed out a great many fresh beauties to Lily, that the child had never seen before ; but she never answered, just looked ; only never said a word all the time that she was out, because she was so sad at having her word still doubted, as she could not help feeling that it was, by her aunt and Mary. Miss Basil, she thought, believed her. But as it was the first time, in all her little life, that she had been disbelieved, for Lilian Tracey was a scrupulously truthful child, it was a dreadful thing for her to be disbelieved now. Kitty was enjoying the row thoroughly, and kept on urging her brother and sister to greater speed, because another boat, on the river, was passing them now, and all the afternoon they had been in front of it.

'We're slackening speed purposely, Kitty,' Ted said, 'because we're going to turn directly.'

But still Lily took no notice of what was going on around her, still she sat as though in very dismal



Lily never said a word all the time that she was out.



dreamland. Lily was trying so hard now to be very good, and please grandfather, granny, and her 'little mother,' and she had never tried hard before her illness ; therefore it seemed so especially dreadful to be in this new kind of undeserved disgrace, and she longed very much, that afternoon, in her loneliness, poor child, to be back home at Hopewell once more.

'I've often been very, very naughty,' Lily said to herself in the boat that afternoon ; 'and I've broken things on purpose even, when I was in a rage, and haven't half been punished enough for it, because everybody was so kind, and the doctor said I oughtn't to cry ; so perhaps I'm being punished for all that now when I'm quite strong, I believe, again, but I hope I shan't be punished like this much more, and that it will soon be found out I didn't do it, though I shouldn't like it to be found out that somebody else did, as they'd have told the story,' the really truth-loving child, for truth's own sake, went on, and then she comforted herself by resolving to write to Conny that evening, and tell her all about the accident, in case she could advise something. Lily had not only a very great love towards, but such faith and hope in, her elder sister.

Lily was kissed as usual by her aunt that evening when she went to bed, and nothing more was

said to her about the looking-glass, but somehow or other the child could feel certain that her word was not believed. Very bitterly Lily cried that night, but not angrily. If possible the little girl was more gentle in her behaviour than usual. If grandfather



'Poor little thing! poor Lily!' Conny said.

could only have seen her, he would have been sure to say that her giant was being slain, her Hercules was being conquered by the brave, large heart and soul of his little Pygmy.

'Poor little thing! poor Lily!' Conny said, when she read and re-read the letter that was written to her that evening, and then went to her desk for a piece of paper on which, at once, to answer it. 'Poor child!' she repeated. 'I wish I could go to her, but granny is so ill now that it would be impossible for me to get away, and it would not do either, even if it were well for Lily to come home now, which it is not, to leave there until her innocence is proved. How dreadful for Lily,' the sister went on, 'to be paying a visit and then to be suspected, not only of breaking something belonging to the house, but of telling an untruth about it!'

Conny sat down to write her letter, but it was a difficult one to write, as she did not quite see what comfort she could give.

'God knows,' she wrote, after a few minutes' thought, 'all about it, and He will make other people know too, so try not to be unhappy, darling, and of course "little mother" knows that you must be telling the truth.'

Ella came in before Conny had finished her letter, with very good news. She and her mother were really going to the next village to Dunkdale, and would start in a very few days, and could take any message to Lily that her sister liked.

'That is splendid,' Conny said; 'it will be almost to Lily like my going.'

'O no, not that,—not like having her "little mother,"' Ella answered; 'but somebody straight from her is sure to be some comfort to Lily.'

'I can add that bit of good news to my letter now,' Conny said; and it never entered her mind that she would miss her friend Ella very much; all she thought of was that somebody was going to comfort Lily,—somebody, too, who could write and tell her exactly how her little sister was looking. She told Ella the story of the looking-glass, and then both girls came to the satisfactory conclusion that the mystery would be sure to be cleared up soon.

Lily opened her letter very eagerly, and read it very often, once aloud to Polly, and then kissed it lovingly before putting it away.

'God knows all about it, and I expect He will make other people know too,' she repeated several times to herself, as though these words brought her the greatest comfort. 'God knows and "little mother,"' Lily added, 'always knows.'



CHAPTER XII.

THE GOLDEN WEDDING.

LILY was delighted to see Ella, and to receive all the loving messages that she brought with her from grandfather, granny, and 'little mother,' but she was very grieved to hear how very ill her grandmother was, and the more she thought about her long, and, as it would now seem, really very serious illness, the more the child grieved for the sorrow and anxiety that she knew must be felt at Hopewell.

'But Ella gave great comfort to her little friend on one terribly sore point, for she told her positively that she did not believe she had had anything to do with breaking the glass. Nobody who had known Lily from a very little child could believe her guilty of a deliberate falsehood.'

A few days after Ella Lovell arrived, she was invited to spend an evening at the farmhouse, and a very enjoyable evening it proved to be. She liked what she had seen of Ted Bernard. He entertained and amused her, and she fancied he was a very clever boy, and she liked all clever people. He did all he could to entertain her, his sisters, his cousin, and himself that evening, 'spouting' to them, as Kitty described it, 'in real earnest ;' and he himself never seemed so much edified as when he was hearing himself 'hold forth.' He was a good juror, in his way, so invited the party to assemble round the table. Ella was opposite to him, Mary to his left, Kitty to his right, and Lily sat between Ella and Kitty on an arm-chair that she had chosen, strange child as she was, because it reminded her a little of grandfather's study ; but even while Ted spoke and conjured, her thoughts were still with the broken looking-glass, and she could not collect them. Ella seemed to be charmed at first with Ted's oratory. Kitty also listened very attentively ; but Mary, although she listened with the rest, could not help smiling at her brother's conceit and vanity.

When the conjuring tricks had been performed, he said he would give them a short lecture, if they liked, on logic. Ella said she would like it very much, and, as Ella was the guest, no one else was asked, and Ted Bernard began quoting from Pro-



'Knowledge, as Lord Bacon said, is power.'

fessor Jevons. 'Logic,' he said, 'is a science which teaches us to reason well, and reasoning gives us knowledge, and knowledge, as Lord Bacon said, is power.'

'We all must reason somehow or other,' he continued, 'but logic is the science of reasoning, and enables us to distinguish between the good reasoning which leads to truth, and the bad reasoning which every day betrays people into error and misfortune.'

That was another exact quotation. 'We are always observing,' he went on, 'always going about with our eyes and ears open, but, at the end of months and years, many of us know simply nothing of the nature of the things which we see before and around us. The usual way in which we reason is to expect things to happen as they have happened before in similar circumstances, but we may sometimes be deceived in this, as things which seem to be alike are often really very different.'

'Like the mushroom and the toadstool,' Kitty said.

'The common way to reason,' Ted soon began again, 'is to expect that things will happen as they have happened before in similar circumstances. But we may often be deceived by this way of reasoning. It is only when things really are quite alike that we can expect them to behave alike. We have to find out what are called the general laws, showing what things will happen

under given circumstances, and a general law of nature is something which is true of many objects, and science is made up of such laws. Our senses tell us what is happening around us, and then good reasoning will help us to discover from this the laws of nature. This is inductive reasoning, by which we ascertain what is true of many different things, but then we must also employ deductive reasoning, which is just the opposite, and which helps us, from a law of nature, to find out what will happen in consequence of it. Reasoning is really getting some knowledge from other knowledge.

'It is most important,' Ted went on, gesticulating a good deal as he spoke, 'to define and classify things properly. We classify things together when we see that they are alike, and when they are exactly alike we know that what is true of one will be true of all. We then divide a large class of things into smaller classes, and, to avoid making blunders over the planning of our classification, we divide each genus into two species, not more, so that one species possesses a particular quality and the other does not. Suppose, for instance, I take dolls, and divide them into those that are wax and those that are not, I cannot be wrong.'

'But there might be other dolls,' Kitty remarked.

'So there might, and, to avoid logical difficulties, I should never make more than two species at each

step,—like wax, not wax ; china, not china ; wooden, not wooden, etc.'

After a time Ted stopped to take breath, when Kitty took the opportunity to ask him if he did not think he had said enough, and might 'shut up' now.

Ella did not seem as much interested as she had been at first, and Lily hardly seemed to be paying any attention at all ; and, as Mary seldom cared for too much of her brother's oratory, nobody pressed Ted to continue his discourse, so, as Kitty had said he had better do, he 'shut up.'

'Did you like Ted's lecture very much, Ella ?' Lily asked later on in the evening. 'I didn't see anything in it to like, and I could not understand it even.'

'At first,' Ella answered, 'I thought it was going to be very interesting, and that Ted was very clever, but I do not think he is now. It seemed to me that he did not know enough of his subject to teach others, and though he said many very good things'—

'They were quotations,' Lily put in.

'He seemed rather to muddle them up together,' Ella ended, 'and not to explain his subjects properly.'

'And he made it so long !' Lily said ; 'grandfather would have told us all that in half the time, and have made it so interesting, by explanations, that we should not have ever wanted him to stop, and he would have kept on giving examples to make

us understand, and it would not have seemed like a lecture, or as if he were teaching us, at all.'

'No,' Ella said; 'grandfather is so clever, and yet he never seems to think he is, or to want other people to think so; but Ted did seem very conceited while he was talking so much about logic, that I can't think him clever any longer.'

'He seemed to me,' Lily said next, 'to be just saying things out of a book, and not to "classify" them quite properly, so I think he had better study his logic a little better himself before he teaches us.'

'You see, Lily,' Ella answered, 'we are quite spoilt by having such a master as "grandfather." He knows everything, and so can teach us just what we want to know, in the best way, out of himself, as it were, instead of out of books.'

'And he's better than any book in the world to learn from,' Lily replied.

'I can't think how it is that Ted knows so much,' Kitty said to her cousin the next morning, 'for he seems to me to be most dreadfully lazy. Just look at him now, lying in that hammock of his that he has put up, doing nothing,—simply doing nothing,' she emphasized.

'Perhaps he is thinking,' Lily said rather satirically,—'getting ideas for his next lecture.'

'He might be doing that,' Kitty replied.

'Then, according to the laws of reasoning, I should say,' Lily answered, 'he is doing two things,—resting his body and improving his mind.'

'I think he looks awfully stupid, at all events,' Kitty said, 'while it is undergoing the improvement. Do you think he's clever?' she then asked.



Ted in his hammock.

'No, I don't think he can be,' Lily answered truthfully, 'because he seems to think so much of himself. Grandfather is clever, everybody knows that, and he never wants to stand up and lecture, or show off in any way.'

'I think Ted will be clever some day,' Kitty said. The girl was very fond of her brother.

'Then he won't think he is himself,' Lily answered sensibly.

'But,' Kitty then said, changing the conversation, 'that hammock is so comfortable. I tried it myself the other day when Ted was out, and then I only did the one thing,—rested my body,—but I did it thoroughly (and it is better to do one thing well than two indifferently, Miss Basil says), for I fell fast asleep; and Ted,' Kitty went on, 'has managed just to swing the network from one tree to another, so as to make it the most lovely place on which to lie down, with even a part to rest the head. He had heard of people having these hammocks abroad, and then thought that it would be a very good idea to make one for himself for the holidays, and as he has succeeded well, I think,' Kitty said, 'he is rather clever to have done that, at all events, and as soon as he gets out now I mean to help you into it; but I do wish you would forget that horrid looking-glass now,' she added; 'I am sure you were thinking of it again that very minute, weren't you, now? You haven't joined in any fun, and have looked quite miserable, ever since the accident happened.'

'I was thinking of it,' Lily answered; 'and how can I be happy? Would you, Kitty, if you were suspected of having said what was untrue?'

'I don't think I could be,' the other replied, 'and I'm not happy now, and am always wondering how I can find out how it was broken, as I would give anything to do so. I am so sorry for you, Lily dear.'

When Lily tried the hammock, which was very soon after this conversation, she agreed with Kitty that it was the most delightful resting-place in which she had ever lain down, and for a few minutes she forgot her sorrow.

But another and a very great one was to befall little Lilian Tracey. The next week brought terribly sad news through the post. Conny, in a letter, had to tell Lily that grandmother had been taken much worse and had died.

'I would rather write to tell her myself, please, grandfather,' Conny had said, when the dear, kind, thoughtful Doctor, in the midst of his great sorrow, wondered how it would be best and kindest to break the news to the absent, impetuous, loving little one; and when the child had read the letter, standing beside her bird, whither she always carried Conny's letters, she threw herself down upon a chair and sobbed as though her little heart would break, Polly imitating, and echoing, the sobs from time to time.

She was very, very fond of her grandparents, and it seemed so dreadful that she would never, never see her grandmother again, and talk to, and love, her at Hopewell, and that she had not seen her for the

very long time that her absence from home seemed to Lily.

Mrs. Bernard had also had a letter, and now came in search of her little niece to bring her all the comfort that she could. She thought she would find her with her bird. That lady was always very kind to Lily, and never referred to the accident in any way, but this seemed all the worse, as the child was sure that she still believed she had done the mischief. Mr. Bernard soon joined them also, and was most gentle and tender towards Lily to-day, and spoke in the kindest terms of her grandfather, wishing that he and Conny could soon come and stay a few days with them.

But Lily shook her head. He would not like to leave his books, she thought ; but then she wondered whether granny's dying would make a great difference to his life, a great difference even to his love for his books, for she remembered how, when her mother died, their home had to be broken up, and she and Conny and Becky and Fluffy had all to go away, and she asked herself now whether grandfather's home would have to be broken up too, and they have to go away from him. Oh, she hoped not ! but she could not somehow picture Hopewell without granny's presence and smile, and she felt very great sorrow now for having sometimes, by being naughty, caused her sorrow ; but she did so hope that

the dear home, the only one she remembered, would remain as it was, and that she and Conny would never leave grandfather, and the happiness they could never take away with them from Hopewell.

Lily said nothing of her fears and misgivings, but just waited for the next letter from Conny. This stated that after the funeral she (Conny) was coming to fetch Lily home, and then they were both going, with grandfather, to the seaside for a little while, before he settled down again in his dear home without "the granny." And Conny knew what this would be to him. They had married very young, and had lived such a happy married life together, and Conny also knew, and had in consequence prepared a great surprise for them, which had delighted both—yes, even dear granny—very much indeed, that the evening on which she died was the close of their golden wedding-day. The dear old lady had seemed so much better in the morning, that her husband had grasped fresh hope, when quite early she had reminded him what day it was, and then received, with real pleasure, the pair of slippers that Lily had worked and sent, and the pair of stockings which Conny had knitted, work that she herself had taught her grandchildren to do so well; and, above all, the surprise-poem which Conny had written had given her unspeakable joy,—written, too, all alone by Conny, first-fruits, granny

thought, of the grandfather's love-labour for the grandchild.

And an hour after dear granny had passed away, he sat by his dead wife's side reading these lines again and again, which were bringing him far more comfort than Conny could ever have hoped that they should.

THE GOLDEN WEDDING.

See ! a church is decked with garlands,
On a glad, glad day of days,
Whilst two, within her sacred walls,
To Heaven their vows upraise.

Hark ! the angels gently whisper
A sweet blessing as they kneel,
' Be their pathway strewn with roses,
And their love as true as steel.'

Once again their new year heralds
The bright birthday of their joy,
And the angel's prayer is answer'd,
They have loved without alloy.

They have reaped their Golden Wedding
In a golden field of love,
Where the seeds of loving-kindness
Have been water'd from above.

They have plough'd life's field together,
Shared the griefs and borne the smarts ;
Now they gather in their harvest,
Tender thoughts of grateful hearts.

And the wife of fifty seasons
Is a bride again to-day :
Let us wish the darling couple
Once more 'God-speed' on their way.

When we fill the cup of greeting
To the husband and the wife,
We will ask for them—these dear ones—
Endless, happy 'Golden Life.'

'God bless the child!' grandfather exclaimed ; 'God bless her for those lines. They're sweetly put together, and not at all badly written for a first attempt ; and how *she* liked them too !' he added. His finger was pointing to the word *endless*. 'I expect,' he said, 'she knew that her *endless* life was soon to begin. Thank God, though,' he said fervently, 'for letting us keep this day together,—our Golden Wedding. She looked forward to it, bless her, and was just spared till the very day, and it has ended brightly for her,—and as for me, God's will be done !'

And as grandfather said these words from his heart, he hid his face in his hands, and resolved to be quite resigned. 'Once more God-speed on their way,' he then repeated. 'Fifty long happy years our way has lain together, our paths have been one, and thank God for them. Now I've to walk alone,—no, not alone, the children are with me ; but God's will be done,' he murmured again,—'God's will be done ;' and when Conny came soon afterwards to look for her grandfather, her verses were still in his hand.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

CONNY could not bear to leave grandfather even for a few days, but, still believing that the mystery of the broken looking-glass would be solved, and thinking somehow that she, 'little mother,' might perhaps be allowed to help to solve it, and longing most anxiously for her dear 'little sister's' character to be cleared before she left Dunkdale, she wanted very much to fetch Lily back from there herself, and so told grandfather that she wished to do this, and asked him to let her write to a young friend of his, of whom she knew he was very fond, to ask him to come and spend the days, that she would be away, at Hopewell with her grandfather, and he had consented for her to do so.

Conny knew all about 'the boy' too, as her grandfather called his young friend. He was another recipient of the dear Doctor's kindness, another one to whom much goodness had been shown by him, one indeed whom he had most signally benefited; and Conny knew that not only would he be delighted to come and visit his old benefactor, but that he would also interest, and bring as much pleasure to, the Doctor as anybody or anything could now.

Young Rutter was at this time an Oxford undergraduate, who remembered with gratitude, when his father had died when he was quite a lad, the Doctor taking him up, teaching him himself first, then paying for his education, and afterwards helping him to go to Oxford. He was now home for his vacation, and, as he often told his mother, his greatest pleasure consisted in spending a few hours in the Doctor's society, he was naturally delighted to receive Conny's letter of invitation to spend a few days at Hopewell, though, for the Doctor's sake, he wished it could have been under happier circumstances, and that the good lady of the house could still have welcomed him.

Conny told grandfather about Lily's trouble before she went away, but until then she had said nothing to him of it, for fear of grieving him, when he was so anxious about his wife's health. He

told her that it was sure to come right, that his truthful little maid must have her innocence established, and that he was very glad Conny was going herself to look into the matter.

But when Conny arrived, as she did a few days later, the matter seemed to have been so thoroughly sifted that there would appear to be no inquiries left for her to make; but it was true comfort to Lily herself, who knew that she was still suspected, to have 'little mother's' warm love and real sympathy.

'Of course, darling,' she said, 'I never doubted you for one moment. How could I, when I don't believe you've ever told an untruth in your life?'

'I should so hate to tell one,' Lily answered. 'It would seem so stupid, so cowardly to do so.'

Lily had a great deal to hear about grandmother's last illness, dear grandfather, and everybody and everything she knew and loved at Hopewell, so at last her thoughts were diverted from her own peculiar trouble.

Since Lily had been at the farm, she had, at Kitty's wish, slept in the same room with her, but to-night Lily asked her if she would mind very much if she slept with Conny instead, as she did so long to sleep in her sister's room once more, and Kitty had said she was to be sure to do just what she liked, so once again the sisters were together.

But Conny could not sleep for wondering about that strange accident. She had been into the room several times to see the looking-glass (of course mended by now) and the flower-vase in front of it, which Lily, ever since she came, till that day,—she did not care to do it after that,—had kept supplied with flowers ; and the looking-glass could certainly not have been broken without somebody breaking it ; and when Conny had seen her aunt alone, and had asked her if she believed Lily had broken the glass, she had answered that she did not like to think so, but could not imagine who else could have done it, as it was quite proved that the child was last in the room that evening.

And another strange thing had also occurred since then, for which nobody could account.

Kitty and Lily had their separate drawing-books, and one day, when Kitty opened hers, she found her cousin's name written in it, which everybody said was in Lilian's handwriting. That it resembled it there was no doubt, but Lily declared positively that she had not written her name there, and as soon as 'little mother' saw the handwriting she also said as positively that it was not her sister's writing.

Kitty slept in a room that adjoined the spare room, and to-night, as Conny and Lily were occupying the spare room, a door leading from it into Kitty's was left open.

As Conny lay awake that night she could not help thinking that she heard some one walking about in the adjoining room, but when she listened very attentively all was once more quiet there. She then fancied that she heard a drawer open, when she jumped out of bed, struck a light, pushed farther open Kitty's door, and went into her room. But surely, she then thought, she must have been deceived in fancying that she heard any one moving about there, for Kitty alone was in the room, and in bed, fast asleep.

As Conny returned to her bed, she said to herself, 'If I were superstitious, and believed in ghosts, I should think there was a mischievous one in this house, who goes about at night making strange noises and breaking things, for Kitty declares that her tea-service was broken in the night.'

But Conny heard no more noises of any kind after that, and soon went to sleep.

On the following day, Mr. Bernard's brother, the children's 'Uncle Ted,' was coming to spend the afternoon and evening at the farm. He had not seen Conny for a great many years, and was coming from some distance on purpose to do so. He was a great favourite among his nephews and nieces, and his godson and namesake Ted had good reason to be as fond of him as he was. Unfortunately for Kitty, the child had had a bad headache all day,

and, complaining more of it towards evening, she went, as she wished to do, to bed directly after tea. Conny, so accustomed to look after her own little sister, went up-stairs with Kitty, and remained with her until she was asleep, which fortunately was only a few minutes after she laid her poor little head down upon her soft pillow. Remembering the strange noise she fancied she had heard twice the night before, and being anxious to know whether Kitty still slept, or had awoke again and wanted anything, Conny went up-stairs to her room about an hour after she had left her there asleep, but found the bed and room empty, and Kitty not in it. Having looked everywhere in vain for her cousin up-stairs, Conny went down-stairs again, and now, noticing that the breakfast-room door was open, she fancied that Kitty perhaps could not sleep, and, wanting her drawing-book or something from that room, had gone down to fetch it, so Conny pushed the door open wider and went in, when she saw Kitty standing in the room, in her night-dress and slippers, looking most strange.

'Kitty,' her cousin said softly; but the child neither heard, nor moved, nor answered. She then called to her again, but although Kitty looked her full in the face it was with an unmeaning look, and as she still gave no answer Conny began to think that she must be walking in her sleep, so, quietly

shutting the morning-room door after her, for fear Kitty should leave that room before she returned, Conny went to fetch the child's mother.

'Will you please come to the morning-room at once, aunt?' Conny said. 'Kitty is there, and I think she is walking in her sleep.'

Mrs. Bernard went at once, all following her very quietly, and Conny as pioneer opened the door, when they saw Kitty standing in front of the looking-glass which had been broken a few weeks ago, with the flower-glass that stood on the table before it in her hand, and the glass was broken again, and the accident had happened so noiselessly that nobody had heard it. Everybody was perfectly quiet, so as not to awaken Kitty, but all now stood within the room,—Kitty's father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, and cousins; and Conny, grieved though she could not help feeling that Kitty had done the mischief even in her sleep, was unspeakably thankful that the mystery was now cleared, and, in sight of so many witnesses, her little sister exonerated, for there was no doubt now that Kitty had unintentionally, in her sleep, quite unknown to herself, broken the glass before.

Kitty then put the vase down and walked to a table, out of the drawer of which she took a book and a pencil, and, sitting down upon an arm-chair in the room, she wrote her name in the book, and

then walked to the drawer, in which she replaced it. Quite noiselessly Kitty then went to the door as though she had no more to do in this room and was leaving it; but a startled cry, that Lily could not help giving as she clung to her sister, awoke Kitty, who rushed into her father's arms. Sitting down upon the chair upon which she had sat a few moments before, he took his child into his arms and soothed her, before carrying her tenderly up-stairs to bed again.

Her mother gave her some quieting medicine, and remained with her until she fell off to sleep once more, which she very soon did.

'I am very sorry, Lily dear,' Mrs. Bernard said, as she returned to the dining-room and drew her niece towards her, 'that I ever suspected you of breaking that looking-glass when you denied having done so. Will you forgive me?'

Lily burst out crying. The strain on her nerves, for the last few weeks, had been too much for her.

'But,' she exclaimed generously, 'I *am* so sorry that Kitty did it.'

'But Kitty never meant to do it,' was her aunt's answer, 'and had no idea that she had. But you must not look so frightened, Lily,' her aunt went on; 'I can't have those pale looks on your little face any longer.'

'It seemed so dreadful to see Kitty walk in her sleep,' Lily answered. 'Is it dangerous?'

'Sleep-walkers very seldom hurt themselves,' was the reply. 'Kitty is an excitable child, and that would perhaps help to account for her having walked in her sleep lately, when she has complained of not feeling very well, but she shall be quite safe, Lily dear, for in future somebody, who is a light sleeper, shall always sleep in the same room with her, and keep the door locked, so that she cannot leave her room;' and as Mrs. Bernard spoke, she too looked somewhat sad and anxious.

'I slept with her all the nights that she walked before and wrote my name in her book,—for uncle,' Lily went on, 'says that it is written just in the same way as Kitty wrote her name last night, though it is more like my writing than hers, and he feels sure that Kitty wrote my name in her drawing-book last week,—and yet I never woke.'

'And I,' Mrs. Bernard went on, 'have never heard anything of it all either, and I thought that the slightest sound would always awaken me.'

But it seemed now that Becky, who slept just above Kitty's room, had heard a rattling of teacups the night before the tea-service was found broken, but had not, till now, thought it worth while to mention the fact to any one but Kitty.

Becky still had Fluffy, who lived a very happy



A startled cry awoke Kitty.



life at the farm. He had appeared very glad indeed to see Conny again when she arrived, and Lily was quite sure that the dog remembered all about them.

‘Who will sleep with Kitty?’ Lily asked.

Conny was looking at Mary.

‘I should like to do so,’ her elder sister said, ‘if mother will trust her to me.’

And their mother did trust Kitty to Mary’s care, and if, till now, Mary had not loved her younger sister as much as Conny had loved hers, she began to care very, very much for her from this time, and to show her love in many little ways; but as far as the sleep-walking was concerned, Kitty seemed really to be broken of it, for although Mary managed to sleep very lightly, so as to hear her little sister, did she even move, night after night passed and she was never disturbed.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE TWO BIRDS.

'**V**E actually never told Polly the good news,' Lily exclaimed the next morning.
'That is a shame, because I told her when I was scolded, so now I must tell her the good part of it; but I must see where Kitty is first, as she's not to hear more of it than we can help, and seems to have forgotten a great deal about walking in her sleep last night already;' and off Lily ran to have a talk to her parrot.

It would be difficult to say who was the most happy that Lily was acquitted, she or her sister, as it would have been difficult before to say who was the most sorrowful whilst she was suspected; but both were very happy this morning, as happy as they could be considering that dear granny was

dead, and they were away from home, and therefore not comforting grandfather; but Conny's letter to-day would, she knew, comfort him very much.

'Excuse my not coming to tell you before, Polly,' Lily said, going into the spare room where the bird now was. 'We've cried together, so now we must rejoice together, mustn't we? But you mustn't repeat what I'm going to tell you now, because Kitty isn't to hear any more about it. She did cry this morning because she knew that she had broken the glass, and said I'd been punished for her; but she's comforted now; so mind, Polly, whatever I tell you this morning is a secret, and you're not to repeat it.'

Polly nodded her wise head.

'First of all,' Lily went on, 'I've a bit of news for you, for we are going back to Hopewell the day after to-morrow, and Mrs. Lovell and Ella are going the same day, so we shall all travel together. And I shall have to wear black then, Polly,' Lily said, 'instead of white; shall you mind? Conny says my black frocks are being made, and I'm to wear them directly I go home.'

'Home! home!' Polly echoed.

'I wonder whether I shall look well in a black frock,' Lily then said. 'Do you think I shall? If you do, Polly, say "yes."

And Polly said the word as well as she could.

Lily was a little vain, so was glad to hear the answer in the affirmative.

It so happened that lying on the bed in the spare room were a ball-dress, a fan, and a pair of dancing-shoes.

'We'll have some fun now, Polly,' Lily said, glancing round at them. 'They must have been put there just for me to try on; and here's a scarf to tie round my head. Why, I shall be just like a princess; fine feathers, you know, make fine birds. That's why you're such a fine bird, because you have such beautiful feathers.'

Polly shrieked, and as Lily always took a loud shriek for a sign of pleasure, or strong approbation, she thought that she was very pleased now. The little girl then arrayed herself in all the finery, and took up the fan, after which she unfastened the bird and allowed her to get on to the floor. She next walked to a large looking-glass opposite to which she stood, still fanning herself as she went along, with Polly first following and then walking beside her.

'I think I look lovely!' Lily exclaimed,—'perfectly lovely!'

Polly was surveying herself in the glass too. 'Perfectly lovely!' she echoed.

'So I do,' said Lily.

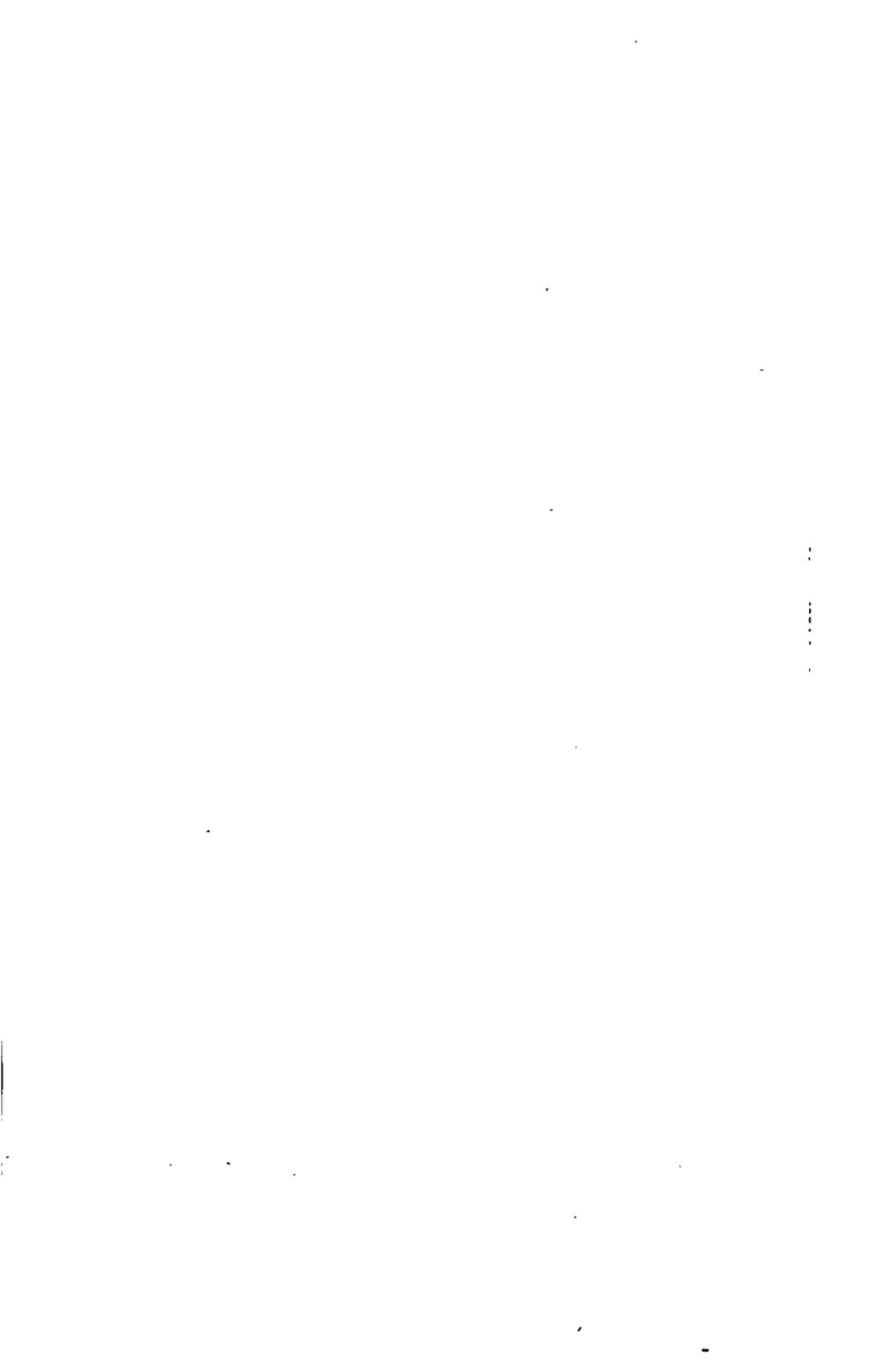
'So I do,' repeated the bird.

The child was now fanning herself very gracefully,



'That stupid Ted,' Polly repeated.

O



and her head was tossed back in rather a conceited fashion.

The bird held up her head too, and seemed thoroughly satisfied with what she saw reflected in the mirror.

'Pretty Polly,' she then went on, 'pretty, pretty Polly.'

'Yes, we certainly are both pretty,' Lily said, in a very self-satisfied tone of voice; 'but we mustn't be vain, as that's very ugly. Ted's vain, and it makes him seem awfully stupid and not clever at all. I wouldn't be vain like Ted for anything in the world,' she went on; 'no, not I.'

'Not I,' the bird echoed again.

'No, I should think not,' Lily said. 'You're much too sensible a bird to be vain like that stupid Ted.'

'That stupid Ted,' Polly repeated very audibly, walking round and round, so as to survey herself well in the glass; but then she suddenly stopped, and shrieked so loudly that she made Lily jump, who, looking round, saw Ted peeping in at the door.

It was Lily's turn to be startled now. How much of their conversation had Ted heard? she wondered. She hoped not much, but she had meant all she said; and if he did not know how stupid his vanity made him look, she thought it might be well that he should learn. Still it seemed

unkind of Polly to call him stupid, when he called her so clever. Anyhow, he was a good-natured fellow, and was evidently thoroughly amused now at the picture that Lily and her bird presented.

'I came to tell you,' he said, 'that Conny and Kitty want you at once. They are in the dining-room; and as they are in a great hurry for you, I would not wait, if I were you, to fold up any of those things, but I should just throw them off anyhow.'

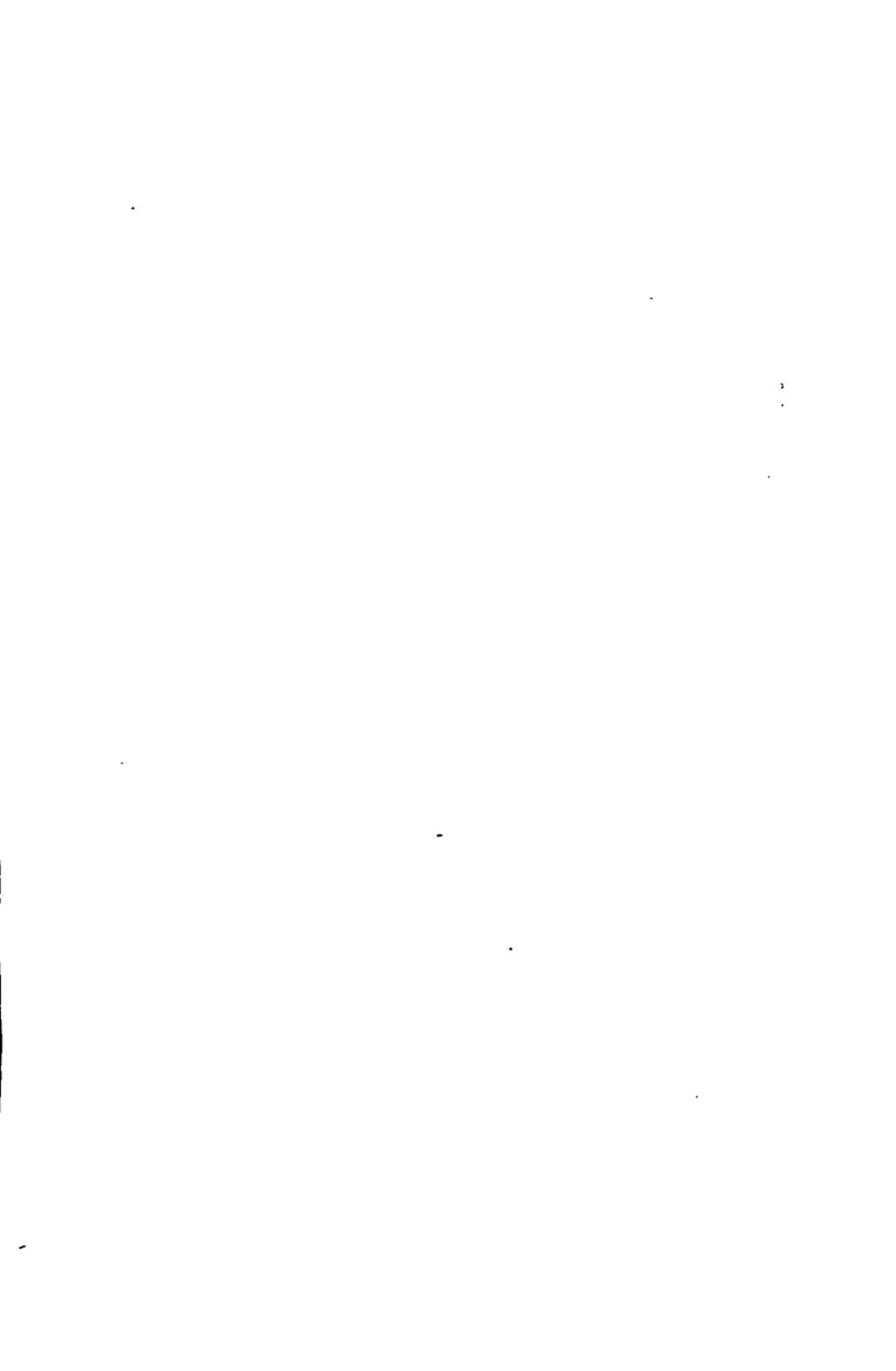
Lily acted upon the advice; but all thoughts of fun were dispelled when she went into the dining-room. She had just left her dear Polly full of life and health and spirits, and here she found Conny and Kitty, and in Conny's hand was Kitty's little bird quite dead, and Kitty was crying with sorrow. Certainly she had not had her bird as many years as Lily had had hers; but the child knew how very fond her cousin was of her tame little pet, and knowing too what she would have felt if, instead, her parrot had died, she was very much grieved for Kitty, who had also had her bird for several years.

'What could it have died of?' Lily asked.

Kitty could not imagine. When she fed it in the morning and gave it fresh water, it seemed to be quite well. They went to search the room in which it so often had its liberty, and in which it had flown about that morning; and there they found a tin of Polly's hempseed uncovered.



'I am sorry I left the tin of hempseed there.'



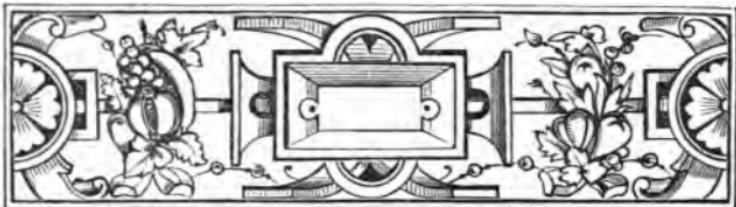
'I expect that's it,' Conny said very sadly, for she knew that Lily must have left the tin there. 'The poor little bird is very fat, you see. Most likely it went on eating that seed, that it likes so much, till a fit was brought on which killed it. You say, Kitty, you just heard a flutter, and turned round and saw the poor little bird tumbling down, as it seemed, in a fit?'

'Yes, I did,' Kitty answered, crying more bitterly; 'but how sweet and sensible of it, when it felt ill, as I suppose it did, to go back to its home to die.'

'Yes, dear little thing,' Lily said. 'But oh, Kitty dear,' she continued, 'it must be all my fault; I am so sorry I left the tin of hempseed there. It was very careless of me, and to think that through my being careless your little bird has died!'

'You didn't mean to do it,' Kitty said, as she took the little bird, that had been so tame and trustful, from Conny's into her own hands and kissed it.

Kitty was a generous child, and did not want to blame anybody for the sorrow that had come to her. She and Lily buried the bird in the afternoon in the garden, and Polly attended the funeral. When, two days later, Lily and her bird went away, and Kitty and her empty cage remained behind, the sorrowing child said nothing about her loss; so nobody really knew how very, very lonely that empty cage made her feel.



CHAPTER XV.

IN GRANDFATHER'S STUDY.

ILLY was delighted to be home once more, although it made her very sad to miss her grandmother, whom she now thought that she must have loved even much better than she knew she had when she was alive. Grandfather seemed also to be very glad to have his grandchildren with him again, and made arrangements at once to take them to the seaside in about a week's time. Conny had, as yet, had no proper change since her own illness, and, after all the nursing that had fallen upon her, it was most necessary that she should now have one as soon as possible.

She tried to be very useful and handy to her grandfather, and did most of his packing for him, trying also, without bothering him at all, to

remember everything that he would be likely to want to take with him.

A couple of days before they started, on going into his study, he found her very busy with his books. She had asked the boy to bring in the 'book-steps,' and was just descending them, with a book in her hand, as grandfather went in.

'What are you doing, Conny?' he asked; and then added quickly, 'and where did you find that book? I have been wanting it for the last three weeks, and could not find it anywhere.'

'I know you have, grandfather,' she answered quickly, 'and I have not had time to look for it before; but I was determined you should not go out of town without it, so I moved the steps along, and turned out all the shelves until I found it behind some books in that second row. I am so glad I have been able to find it for you, and as soon as I had laid it safely on the table I meant to put all those books straight again that I have disarranged; but as I only cleared one shelf at a time, I know I have left the books all on their proper shelves. Then, grandfather,' she went on, still standing on the steps, 'I have put on the table for you to look over all the books that I thought you would like to have packed to take away with you, so please see if they are right. I've put a Wordsworth to go, as you are so fond of his poetry. Why are you,

grandfather?' she asked. 'He seems to have such a simple style.'

Directly Conny had said this she knew that she had asked a silly question.

'That is why I do admire him so much, my child,' was the answer. 'And I am glad that you have read his poems also with so much discernment. The beautiful simplicity of Wordsworth's poems is what I so very much admire about them,' he repeated; 'and then, too, he has so much heart. His writings have been very justly said to remain, Conny, "amongst the lays of his own age, as the most soothing and instructive to the heart of the reader."

'Yes, Conny,' grandfather went on, 'we will find room for that little volume; and I expect you have chosen all the other books well also, for now I really think you know my books and papers almost as well as I do myself. You are a most useful little woman to me, Conny, and a great comfort. God bless you, dear, for your love and goodness to me,—and to *her*,' he added softly. 'I noted well, my child, what comfort you brought to her in her dying hours, and from my heart I thank you for it.'

'I thank you so much, grandfather,' the girl answered, 'for letting me wait on dear granny, and I am so glad to be a little useful to you.'

How Conny admired her grandfather as she stood



'God bless you, dear, for your love and goodness to me,—and to *her*.'



thus on the staircase ladder, looking down upon him! His grave, now sad face was a very beautiful one, on which no wrinkle had even yet appeared. There was a wonderful depth of expression in his large grey eyes, that seemed, as they looked into your face, to be saying so much to you; such a grandeur, too, the girl thought there was in the thick mass of silver hair that crowned his clever head. He looked so great and noble altogether, standing there, upright as he always was, while his new mourning dressing-gown, she fancied, helped to set off his broad shoulders; and the now patient bearing of a great sorrow helped to enhance the beauty of a character that had appeared to Conny, even before, to be almost perfection.

The young girl had read to granny, ever since she came to Hopewell, the lessons for the day, as marked in her Prayer-Book, and she had read them to herself, or Lily, since granny had gone away.

It was the eighteenth of July to-day, and that morning they had read together in Proverbs xx, and 29th verse, these words: 'The beauty of old men is the grey head;' and as Conny looked at her grandfather's hair now, and thick, long beard of silver, she thought that God had made her grandfather very beautiful indeed, with that mass of silver ornament. She often recalled to mind, too, how Lily had said, on the night of their arrival at Hopewell,

'He's just like Abraham.' Standing there now, with his dear hands behind him, gazing so lovingly at her, he certainly looked, she thought, 'like a grand old patriarch.'

'Wasn't it a good thing, grandfather,' she asked later in the day, when they were packing his things together, 'that it was all found out about that looking-glass?' She had talked to her grandfather about it before, but wanted him to be sorry once more for poor little Lily. 'Oh, Lily,' she went on, 'did look so dreadfully sad when I arrived; and do you know I was almost rude to aunt, for I wanted to tell her that she ought not to have judged Lily, even if appearances were against her, and that I thought her very unjust, but'—

'But,' he interrupted, 'you were wise enough to remember that it would have been anything but polite to speak thus to your aunt. You know, Conny, it has been well said that "what you keep by you you can change and mend, but *words* once spoken can never be recalled," so it is most important for us to weigh words well before we give utterance to them.'

'What a number of words you speak to good purpose, grandfather!' Conny answered; 'and you cannot think how Lily remembers what you teach her. The night the accident was all found out, she said, when we went to bed, "Grandfather would

say, Conny, that I hadn't been quite like Patience in *Pilgrim's Progress*, 'willing to wait ;' but if I had known that it would all have come right, I would have been."

'Poor little one !' grandfather said. 'But we have to be good and patient, Conny, haven't we,' he added, 'without knowing ?'

'Yes, grandfather ; and something else Lily said to me the evening I arrived, I think you would also like to hear. She was telling me that of course she had spoken the truth, that if she had broken the glass she would have told the truth about it, because by saying what was untrue she would only make one fault into two, and then she repeated a quotation that you had taught her the evening of the day on which she did not tell you that she had a poetry lesson to learn, because she did not mean to learn it, and it was this : "Lie not, but let thy heart be true to God, thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both. Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie. A fault which needs it most grows two thereby."

'Poor little one !' grandfather said again, very tenderly. 'I believe she felt that she had acted one then and needed the lesson. But in her naughtiest moods, Conny, I knew there was ever so much good in the child, and, though it was hard for her to be misbelieved and misjudged, the correction was

no doubt very good for her too, for our spoilt child needed some severe correction to make her thorough master of herself, and I believe this trial will have done her great good.'

'I believe so too, grandfather,' Conny answered. 'She does seem such a good child now, and I do so hope she 'll go on growing better and better, so that she may be a very great comfort to you ; and you *will* try to be as happy as you can, grandfather dear, without granny, won't you ?' Conny went on, speaking very sadly, 'for I mean also to try to comfort and help you very much.'

'You both do that now, my child. You little know, Conny,' he continued, kissing his grandchild as he spoke, 'how much comfort you have brought to your lonely old grandfather's heart,—far more than you could imagine ; and if you go on loving me as you do now, you will very soon have repaid me far more than you could ever owe. God bless you both, my dear grandchildren, and God be thanked for bringing you to me for my great comfort !'

That was how grandfather took everything. All the many great, and little, acts of kindness which he showed to, the benefits he conferred upon, others, were just, somehow or other (though it was difficult sometimes to know exactly how he worked it all out), kindnesses shown towards, and benefits conferred by, them upon himself.

q. v





